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Chas Thomas.

WILSON'S TALES OF THE  
BORDERS, AND OF  
SCOTLAND. HISTORICAL,  
TRADITIONARY, AND IMAGIN-  
ATIVE.



REVISED BY ALEXANDER LEIGHTON, ONE OF  
THE ORIGINAL EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

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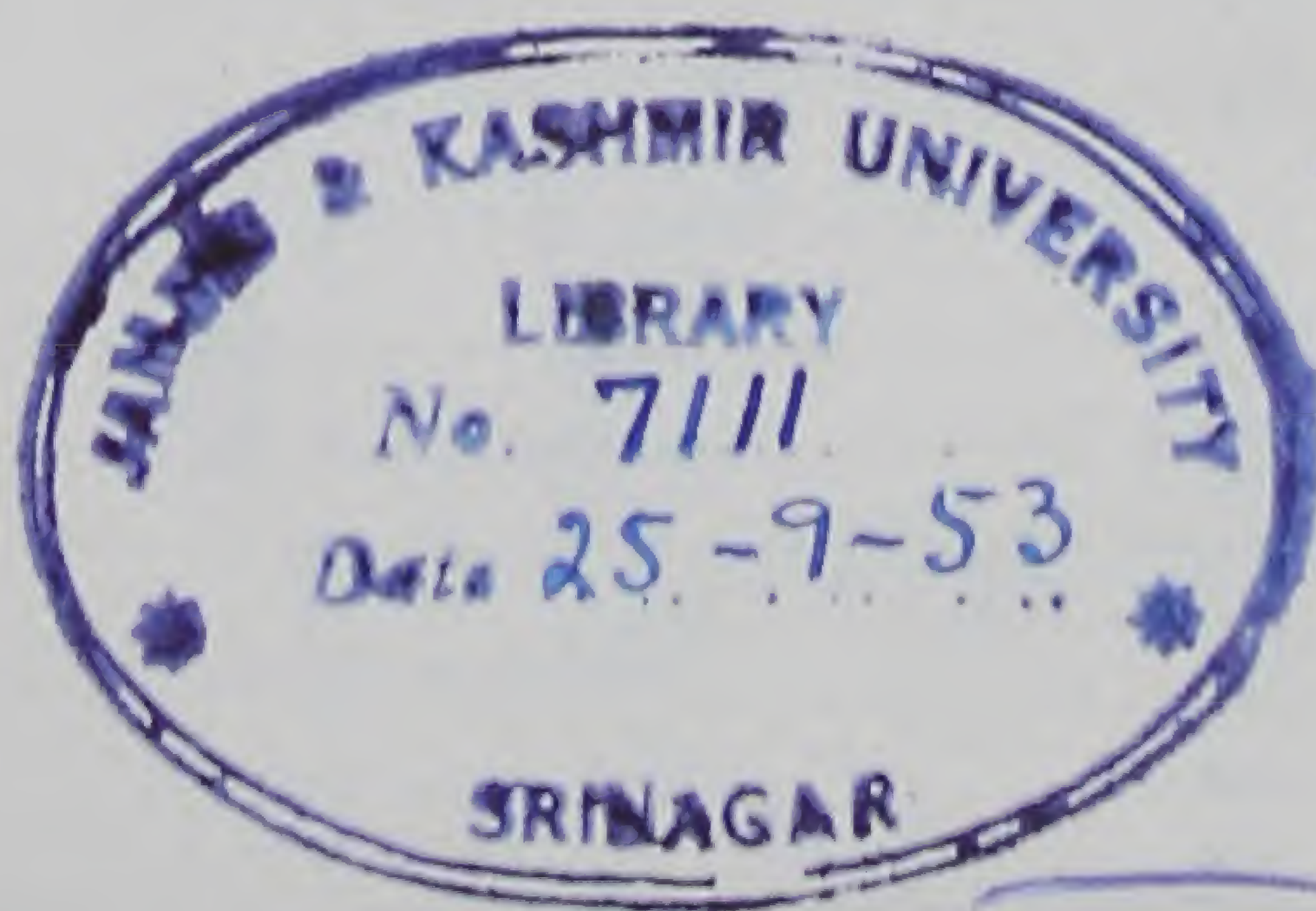




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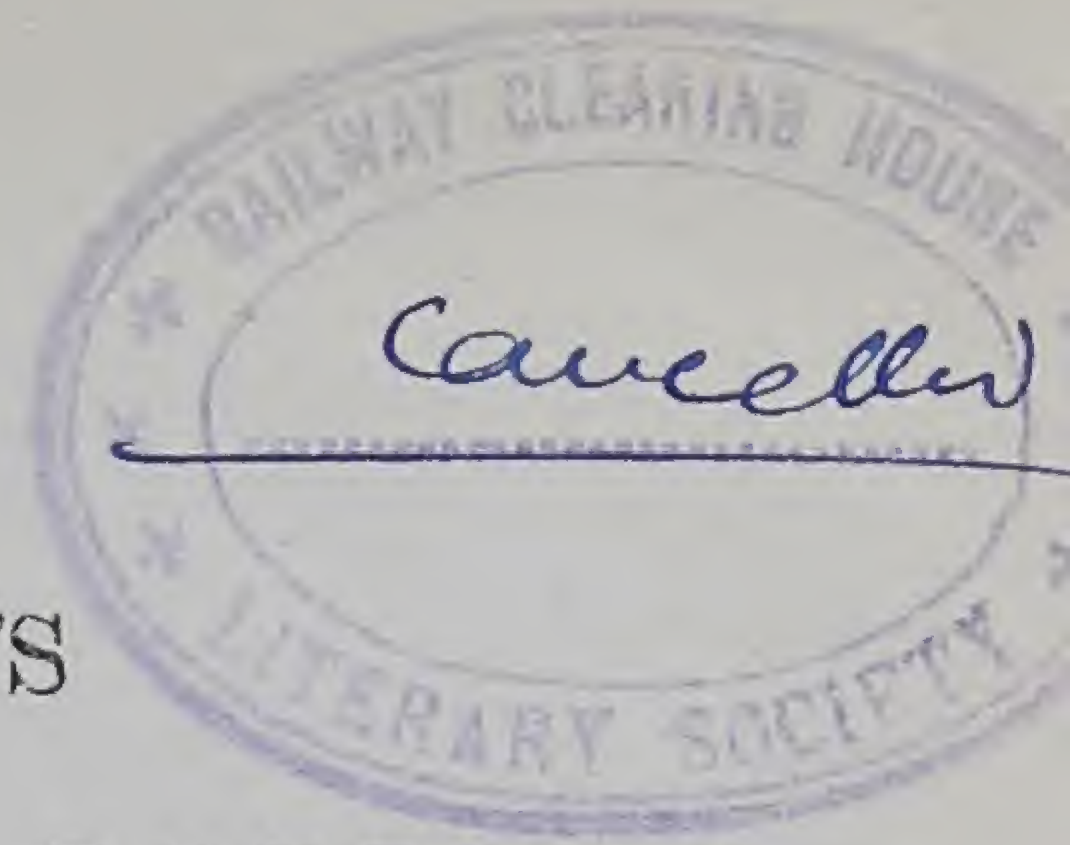


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WILSON'S  
TALES OF THE BORDERS,  
AND OF SCOTLAND.

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THE SOLITARY OF THE CAVE.

ON the banks of the Tweed, and about half a mile above where the Whitadder flows into it on the opposite side, there is a small and singular cave. It is evidently not an excavation formed by nature, but the work of man's hands. To the best of my recollection, it is about ten feet square, and in the midst of it is a pillar or column, hewn out of the old mass, and reaching from the floor to the roof. It is an apartment cut out of the solid rock, and must have been a work of great labour. In the neighbourhood, it is generally known by the name of the King's Cove, and the tradition runs, that it was once the hiding-place of a Scottish king. Formerly, it was ascended from the level of the water by a flight of steps, also hewn out of the rock; but the mouldering touch of time, the storms of winter, and the undermining action of the river, which continually appears to press southward, (as though nature aided in enlarging the Scottish boundary,) has long since swept them away, though part of them were entire within the memory of living men. What king used it as a hiding-place, tradition sayeth not: but it also whispers that it was used for a like purpose by the "great patriot hero," Sir William Wallace. These things may have been; but certainly it never was



formed to be a mere place of concealment for a king, though such is the popular belief. Immediately above the bank where it is situated, are the remains of a Roman camp; and it is more than probable that the cave is coeval with the camp, and may have been used for religious purposes—or, perchance, as a prison.

But our story has reference to more modern times. Almost ninety years have fallen as drops into the vast ocean of eternity, since a strange and solitary man took up his residence in the cave. He appeared a melancholy being—he was seldom seen, and there were few with whom he would hold converse. How he lived no one could tell, nor would he allow any one to approach his singular habitation. It was generally supposed that he had been “out,” as the phrase went, with Prince Charles, who, after being hunted as a wild beast upon the mountains, escaped to France only a few months before the appearance of the Solitary on Tweedside. This, however, was merely a conjecture. The history and character of the stranger were a mystery; and the more ignorant of the people believed him to be a wizard or wicked man, who, while he avoided all manner of intercourse with his fellow-mortals, had power over and was familiar with the spirits of the air; for, at that period, the idle belief in witchcraft was still general. His garments were as singular as his habits, and a large coarse cloak or coat, of a brown colour, fastened around him with a leathern girdle, covered his person; while on his head he wore a long, conical cap, composed of fox-skins, somewhat resembling those worn now-a-days by some of our regiments of dragoons. His beard, which was black, was also permitted to grow. But there was a dignity in his step, as he was occasionally observed walking upon the banks over his hermitage, and an expression of pride upon his countenance and in the glance of his eyes, which spoke him to have been a person of some note.



For three years he continued the inhabitant of the cave ; and, throughout that period, he permitted no one to enter it. But, on its appearing to be deserted for several days, some fishermen, apprehending that the recluse might be dying, or perchance dead, within it, ascended the flight of steps, and, removing a rude door which merely rested against the rock and blocked up the aperture, they perceived that the cave was tenantless. On the farther side of the pillar, two boards, slightly raised as an inclined plane, and covered with dried rushes, marked what had been the bed of the Solitary. A low stool, a small and rude table, with two or three simple cooking utensils, completed the furniture of the apartment. The fishermen were about to withdraw, when one of them picked up a small parcel of manuscripts near the door of the cave, as though the hermit had dropped them by accident at his departure. They appeared to be intended as letters to a friend, and were entitled—

“MY HISTORY.”

“Dear Lewis, (they began,) when death shall have sealed up the eyes, and perchance some stranger dug a grave for your early friend, Edward Fleming, then the words which he now writes for your perusal may meet your eye. You believe me dead—and would to Heaven that I had died, ere my hands became red with guilt, and my conscience a living fire which preys upon and tortures me, but will not consume me ! You remember—for you were with me—the first time I met Catherine Forrester. It was when her father invited us to his house in Nithsdale, and our hearts, like the season, were young. She came upon my eyes as a dream of beauty, a being more of heaven than of earth. You, Lewis, must admit that she was all that fancy can paint of loveliness. Her face, her form, her auburn ringlets, falling over a neck of alabaster !—where might man



find their equal? She became the sole object of my waking thoughts, the vision that haunted my sleep. And was she not good as beautiful? Oh! the glance of her eyes was mild as a summer morning breaking on the earth, when the first rays of the sun shoot like streaks of gold across the sea. Her smile, too—you cannot have forgotten its sweetness! never did I behold it, but I thought an angel was in my presence, shedding influence over me. There was a soul, too, in every word she uttered. Affectation she had none; but the outpourings of her mind flowed forth as a river, and her wit played like the ripple which the gentle breeze makes to sport upon its bosom. You may think that I am about to write you a maudlin tale of love, such as would draw tears from a maiden in her teens, while those of more sober age turned away from it, and cried—‘Pshaw!’ But fear not—there is more of misery and madness than of love in my history. And yet, why should we turn with affected disgust from a tale of the heart’s first, best, purest, and dearest affections? It is affectation, Lewis—the affectation of a cynic, who cries out, ‘vanity of vanities, all is vanity,’ when the delicacy of young affection has perished in his own breast. Who is there bearing the human form that looks not back upon those days of tenderness and bliss, with a feeling akin to that which our first parents might have experienced, when they looked back upon the Eden from which they had been expelled? Whatever may be your feelings, forgive me, while, for a few moments, I indulge in the remembrance of this one bright spot in my history, even although you are already in part acquainted with it.

We had been inmates beneath the roof of Sir William Forrester for somewhat more than two months, waiting to receive intelligence regarding the designs of his Excellency, or the landing of the Prince. It was during the Easter holidays, and you had gone to Edinburgh for a few days,



to ascertain the feelings and the preparations of the friends of the cause there. I remained almost forgetful of our errand, dreaming beneath the eyes of Catherine. It was on the second day after your departure, Sir William sat brooding over the possible results of the contemplated expedition, now speaking of the feeling of the people, the power of the house of Hanover, the resources of Prince Charles, and the extent of the assistance he was likely to receive from France—drowning, at the same time, every desponding thought that arose in an additional glass of claret, and calling on me to follow his example. But my thoughts were of other matters. Catherine sat beside me, arranging Easter gifts for the poor; and I, though awkwardly, attempted to assist her. Twilight was drawing on, and the day was stormy for the season, for the snow fell, and the wind whirled round the drift in fantastic columns; but with us, the fire blazed blithely, mingling its light with the fading day, and though the storm raged without, and Sir William seemed ready to sink into melancholy, I was happy—more than happy. But attend, Lewis, for I never told you this; at the very moment when my happiness seemed tranquil as the rays of a summer moon at midnight, showering them on a mountain and casting its deep, silent shadow on a lake, as though it revealed beneath the waters a bronzed and a silent world, the trampling of a horse's feet was heard at the gate. I looked towards the narrow window. A blackish-brown, shaggy animal attempted to trot towards the door. It had rough hanging ears, a round form, and hollow back; and a tall lathy-looking figure, dismounting from it, gave the bridle to Sir William's groom, and uttered his orders respecting it, notwithstanding of the storm, with the slowness and solemnity of a judge. And, fearful that, although so delivered, they might not be obeyed to the letter—

‘A merciful man regardeth the life of his beast,’ said he, and stalked to the stable behind them.



‘There go a brace of originals,’ thought I; and, with difficulty, I suppressed a laugh.

But Catherine smiled not, and her father left the room to welcome the vistant.

The tall, thin man now entered. I call him tall, for his stature exceeded six feet; and I say thin, for nature had been abundantly liberal with bones and muscle, but woefully niggard in clothing them with flesh. His limbs, however, were lengthy enough for a giant of seven feet; and it would be difficult for me to say, whether his swinging arms, which seemed suspended from his shoulders, appeared more of use or of incumbrance. His countenance was a thoughtful blank, if you will allow me such an expression. He had large, grey, fixture-like, unmeaning eyes; and his hair was carefully combed back and plaited behind, to show his brow to the best advantage. He gave two familiar stalks across the floor, and he either did not see me, or he cared not for seeing me.

‘A good Easter to ye, Catherine, my love!’ said he. ‘Still employed wi’ works o’ love an’ charity? How have ye been, dear?’ And he lifted her fair hand to his long blue lips.

Catherine was silent—she became pale, deadly pale. I believe her hand grew cold at his touch, and that she would have looked to me; but she could not—she dared not. *Something forbade it.* But with me the spell was broken—the chain that bound me to her father’s house, that withheld me from accompanying you to Edinburgh, was revealed. The uncouth stranger tore the veil from my eyes—he showed me the first glance of love in the mirror of jealousy. My teeth grated together—my eyes flashed—drops of sweat stood upon my forehead. My first impulse was to dash the intruder to the ground; but, to hide my feelings, I rose from my seat, and was about to leave the room.



‘Sir, I ask your pardon,’ said he—‘I did not observe that ye was a stranger; but that accounts for the uncommon dryness o’ my Katie. Yet, sir, ye mustna think that, though she is as modest as a bit daisy peeping out frae beneath a clod to get a blink o’ the sun, but that we can hae our ain crack by our twa sels for a’ that.’

‘Sir Peter Blakely,’ said Catherine, rising with a look expressive of indignation and confusion, ‘what mean ye?’

‘Oh, no offence, Miss Catherine—none in the world,’ he was beginning to say, when, fortunately, her father entered, as I found that I had advanced a step towards the stranger, with I scarce know what intention; but it was not friendly.

‘Sir Peter,’ said Sir William, ‘allow me to introduce you to my young friend, Mr. Fleming; he is *one of us*—a supporter of the good cause.’

He introduced me in like manner. I bowed—trembled—bowed again.

‘I am very happy to see you, Mr. Fleming,’ said Sir Peter—‘very happy, indeed.’ And he stretched out his huge collection of fingers to shake hands with me.

My eyes glared on his, and I felt them burn as I gazed on him. He evidently quailed, and would have stepped back; but I grasped his hand, and scarce knowing what I did, I grasped it as though a vice had held it. The blood sprang to his thin fingers, and his glazed orbs started farther from their sockets.

‘Save us a’! friend! friend! Mr Fleming! or what do they ca’ ye?’ he exclaimed in agony; ‘is that the way you shake hands in your country? I would hae ye to mind my fingers arena made o’ cauld iron.’

The cold and the snow had done half the work with his fingers before, and the grasp I gave them squeezed them into torture; and he stood shaking and rattling them in the air, applying them to his lips and again to the fire.



and, finally, dancing round the room, swinging his tormented hand, and exclaiming—

‘Sorrow take ye! for I dinna ken whether my fingers be off or on!’

Sir William strove to assure him it was merely the effect of cold, and that I could not intend to injure him, while, with difficulty, he kept gravity at the grotesque contortions and stupendous strides of his intended son-in-law. Even Catherine’s countenance relapsed into a languid smile, and I, in spite of my feelings, laughed outright, while the object of our amusement at once wept and laughed to keep us company.

You will remember that I slept in an apartment separated only by a thin partition from the breakfast parlour. In the partition which divided my chamber from the parlour was a door that led to it, one half of which was of glass, and in the form of a window, and over the glass fell a piece of drapery. It was not the door by which I passed from or entered my sleeping room, but through the drapery I could discover (if so minded) whatever took place in the adjoining apartment.

Throughout the night I had not retired to rest; my soul was filled with anxious and uneasy thoughts; and they chased sleep from me. I felt how deeply, shall I say how madly, I loved my Catherine; and, in Sir Peter Blakely, I beheld a rival who had forestalled me in soliciting her hand; and I hated him. My spirit was exhausted with its own bitter and conflicting feelings; and I sat down as a man over whom agony of soul has brought a stupor, with my eyes vacantly fixed upon the curtain which screened me from the breakfast parlour. Sir Peter entered it, and the sound of his footsteps broke my reverie. I could perceive him approach the fire, draw forward a chair, and place his feet on each side of the grate. He took out his tobacco-box, and began to enjoy the comforts of his morning pipe



in front of a 'green fire;' shivering—for the morning was cold—and edging forward his chair, until his knees almost came in conjunction with the mantelpiece. His pipe was finished, and he was preparing to fill it a second time. He struck it over his finger, to shake out the dust which remained after his last whiff; he struck it a second time, (he had been half dreaming, like myself,) and it broke in two and fell among his feet. He was left without a companion. He arose and began to walk across the room; his countenance bespoke anxiety and restlessness. I heard him mutter the words—

'I will marry her!—yea, I will!—my sweet Catherine!'

Every muttered word he uttered was a dagger driven into my bosom. At that moment, Sir William entered the parlour.

'Sir,' said Sir Peter, after their morning salutations, 'I have been thinking it is a long way for me to come over from Roxburgh to here'—and he paused, took out his snuff-box, opened the lid, and added—'Yes, sir, it is a long way'—he took a pinch of snuff, and continued—'Now, Sir William, I have been thinking that it would be as well, indeed a great deal better, for you to come over to my lodge at a time like this.' Here he paused, and placed the snuff-box in his pocket.

'I can appreciate your kind intentions,' said Sir William, 'but'—

'There can be no *buts* about it,' returned the other — 'I perceive ye dinna understand me, Sir William. What I mean is this'—but here he seemed at a loss to explain his meaning; and, after standing with a look of confusion for a few moments, he took out his tobacco-box, and added—'I would thank you, sir, to order me a pipe.' The pipe was brought—he put it in the fire, and added—'I have been thinking, Sir William, very seriously have I been thinking, on a change of life. I am no great bairn in the



world now; and, I am sure, sir, none knows better than you (who for ten years was my guardian), that I never had such a degree of thoughtlessness about me as to render it possible to suppose that I would make a bad husband to any woman that was disposed to be happy.' Once more he became silent, and taking his pipe from the fire, after a few thoughtful whiffs, he resumed—'Servants will have their own way without a mistress owre them; and I am sure it would be a pity to see onything going wrong about my place, for every body will say, that has seen it, that the sun doesna wauken the birds to throw the soul of music owre a lovelier spot, in a' his journey round the globe. Now, Sir William,' he added, 'it is needless for me to say it, for every person within twenty miles round is aware that I am just as fond o' Miss Catherine as the laverock is o' the blue lift; and it is equally sure and evident to me, that she cares for naebody but mysel.'

Lewis! imagine my feelings when I heard him utter this! There was a word that I may not write, which filled my soul, and almost burst from my tongue. I felt agony and indignation burn over my face. Again, I heard him add—'When I was over in the middle o' harvest last, ye remember that, in your presence, I put the queston fairly to her; and, although she hung down her head and said nothing, yet that, sir, in my opinion, is just the way a virtuous woman ought to consent. I conceive that it shewed true affection, and sterling modesty; and, sir, what I am now thinking is this—Catherine is very little short of one-and-twenty, and I, not so young as I have been, am every day drawing nearer to my sere and yellow leaf; and I conceive it would be great foolishness—ye will think so yourself—to be putting off time.'

'My worthy friend,' said Sir William, 'you are aware that the union you speak of is one from which my consent has never been withheld; and I am conscious that, in com-



plying with your wishes, I shall bestow my daughter's hand upon one whose heart is as worthy of her affections as his actions and principles are of her esteem.'

Sir Peter gave a skip (if I may call a stride of eight feet by such a name) across the room, he threw the pipe in the grate, and, seizing the hand of Sir William, exclaimed—

'Oh, joy supreme! oh, bliss beyond compare!

My cup runs owre—Heaven's bounty can nae mair!'

'Excuse the quotation from a profane author,' he added, 'upon such a solemn occasion; but he expresses exactly my feelings at this moment; for, oh, could you feel what I feel here!'—And he laid his hand upon his breast. 'Whatever be my faults, whatever my weakness, I am strong in gratitude.'

You will despise me for having played the part of a mean listener. Be it so, Lewis—I despise, I hate myself. I heard it proposed that the wedding-day should take place within a month: but the consent of Catherine was not yet obtained. I perceived her enter the apartment; I witnessed her agony when her father communicated to her the proposal of his friend, and his wish that it should be agreed to. Shall I tell it you, my friend, that the agony I perceived on her countenance kindled a glow of joy upon mine? Yes, I rejoiced in it, for it filled my soul with hope, it raised my heart as from the grave.

Two days after this, and I wandered forth among the woods, to nourish hope in solitude. Every trace of the recent storm had passed away, the young buds were wooing the sunbeams, and the viewless cuckoo lifted up its voice from afar. All that fell upon the ear, and all that met the eye, contributed to melt the soul to tenderness. My thoughts were of Catherine, and I now thought how I should unbosom before her my whole heart; or, I fancied her by my side, her fair face beaming smiles on mine, her lips whisper-



ing music. My spirit became entranced—it was filled with her image. With my arms folded upon my bosom, I was wandering thus unconsciously along a footpath in the wood, when I was aroused by the exclamation—

‘Edward!’

It was my Catherine. I started as though a disembodied spirit had met me on my path. Her agitation was not less than mine. I stepped forward—I would have clasped her to my bosom—but resolution forsook me—her presence awed me—I hesitated and faltered—

‘*Miss Forrester!*’

I had never called her by any other name; but, as she afterwards told me, the word then went to her heart, and she thought, ‘He cares not for me, and I am lost!’ Would to Heaven that such had ever remained her thoughts, and your friend would have been less guilty and less wretched than he this day is!

I offered her my arm, and we walked onward together; but we spoke not to each other—we could not speak. Each had a thousand things to say, but they were all unutterable. A stifled sigh escaped from her bosom, and mine responded to it. We had approached within a quarter of a mile of her father’s house. Still we were both silent. I trembled—I stood suddenly still.

‘Catherine!’ I exclaimed, and my eyes remained fixed upon the ground—my bosom laboured in agony—I struggled for words, and, at length, added, ‘I cannot return to your father’s—Catherine, I cannot!’

‘Edward!’ she cried, ‘whither—whither would you go?—you would not leave me thus? What means this?’

‘Means! Catherine!’ returned I—‘are ye not to be another’s? Would that I had died before I had looked upon thy face, and my soul was lighted with a fleeting joy, only that the midnight of misery might sit down on it for ever!’



‘Oh, speak not thus!’ she cried, and her gentle form shook as a blighted leaf in an autumnal breeze; ‘speak not language unfit for you to utter or me to hear. Come, dear Edward!’

‘*Dear Edward!*’ I exclaimed, and my arms fell upon her neck—‘that word has recalled me to myself! *Dear Edward!*—repeat those words again!—let the night-breeze whisper them, and bear them on its wings for ever! Tell me, Catherine, am I indeed *dear* to you?’

She burst into tears, and hid her face upon my bosom.

‘Edward!’ she sobbed, ‘let us leave this place—I have said too much—let us return home.’

‘No, loved one!’ resumed I; ‘if you have said too much, we part now, and eternity may not unite us! Farewell, Catherine!—be happy! Bear my thanks to your father, and say—but, no, no!—say nothing,—let not the wretch he has honoured with his friendship blast his declining years! Farewell, love!’ I pressed my lips upon her snowy brow, and again I cried—‘Farewell!’

‘You must not—shall not leave me!’ she said, and trembled; while her fair hands grasped my arm.

‘Catherine,’ added I, ‘can I see you another’s? The thought chokes me! Would you have me behold it?—shall my eyes be withered by the sight? Never, never! Forgive me!—Catherine, forgive me! I have acted rashly, perhaps cruelly; but I would not have spoken as I have done—I would have fled from your presence—I would not have given one pang to your gentle bosom—your father should not have said that he sheltered a scorpion that turned and stung him; but, meeting you as I have done to-day, I could no longer suppress the tumultuous feelings that struggled in my bosom. But it is past. Forgive me—forget me!’

Still memory hears her sighs, as her tears fell upon my bosom, and, wringing her hands in bitterness, she cried—



‘Say not, *forget* you! If, in compliance with my father’s will, I must give my hand to another, and if to him my vows must be plighted, I will keep them sacred—yet my heart is yours!’

Lewis! I was delirious with joy, as I listened to this confession from her lips. The ecstasy of years was compressed into a moment of deep, speechless, almost painful luxury. We mingled our tears together, and our vows went up to heaven a sacrifice pure as the first that ascended, when the young earth offered up its incense from paradise to the new-born sun.

I remained beneath her father’s roof until within three days of the time fixed for her becoming the bride of Sir Peter Blakely. Day by day, I beheld my Catherine move to and fro like a walking corpse—pale, speechless, her eyes fixed and lacking their lustre. Even I seemed unnoticed by her. She neither sighed nor wept. A trance had come over her faculties. She made no arrangements for her bridal; and when I at times whispered to her that *she should be mine!* O Lewis! she would then smile—but it was a smile where the light of the soul was not—more dismal, more vacant than the laugh of idiotcy! Think, then, how unlike they were to the rainbows of the soul which I had seen radiate the countenance of my Catherine!

Sir Peter Blakely had gone into Roxburghshire, to make preparations for taking home his bride, and her father had joined you in Edinburgh, relative to the affairs of Prince Charles, in consequence of a letter which he had received from you, and the contents of which might not even be communicated to me. At any other time, and this lack of confidence would have provoked my resentment; but my thoughts were then of other things, and I heeded it not. Catherine and I were ever together; and for hour succeeding hour we sat silent, gazing on each other. O my friend! could your imagination conjure up our feelings and our



thoughts in this hour of trial, you would start, shudder, and think no more. The glance of each was as a pestilence, consuming the other. As the period of her father's return approached, a thousand resolutions crowded within my bosom—some of magnanimity, some of rashness. But I was a coward—morally, I was a coward. Though I feared not the drawn sword nor the field of danger more than another man, yet misery compels me to confess what I was. Every hour, every moment, the sacrifice of parting from her became more painful. Oh! a mother might have torn her infant from her breast, dashed it on the earth, trampled on its outstretched hands, and laughed at its dying screams, rather than that I now could have lived to behold my Catherine another's.

Suddenly, the long, the melancholy charm of my silence broke. I fell upon my knee, and, clenching my hands together, exclaimed—

‘Gracious Heaven!—if I be within the pale of thy mercy, spare me this sight! Let me be crushed as an atom—but let not mine eyes see the day when a tongue speaks it, nor mine ears hear the sound that calls her another's.’

I started to my feet, I grasped her hands in frenzy, I exclaimed—‘You *shall* be mine!’ I took her hand. ‘Catherine!’ I added, ‘you will not—you **SHALL** not give your hand to another! It is mine, and from mine it shall not part! And I pressed it to my breast as a mother would her child from the knife of a destroyer.

‘It **SHALL** be yours!’ she replied wildly; and the feeling of life and consciousness again gushed through her heart. But she sank on my breast, and sobbed—

‘My father! O my father!’

‘Your father is Sir Peter Blakely's friend,’ replied I, ‘and he will not break the pledge he has given him. With his return, Catherine, my hopes and life perish together.’



Now only can you save yourself—now only can you save me. Fly with me!—be mine, and your father's blessing will not be withheld. Hesitate now, and farewell happiness.'

She hastily raised her head from my breast, she stood proudly before me, and, casting her bright blue eyes upon mine, with a look of piercing inquiry, said—

'Edward! what would you have me to do? Deep as my love for you is—and I blush not to confess it—would you have me to fly with you accompanied by the tears of blighted reputation—followed by the groans and lamentations of a heart-broken father—pointed at by the finger of the world as an outcast of human frailty? Would you have me to break the last cord that binds to existence the only being to whom I am related on earth—for whom have I but my father? My *hand* I shall *never* give to another; but I cannot, I will not leave my father's house. If Catherine Forrester has gained your *love*, she shall not forfeit your *esteem*. I may droop in secret, Edward, as a bud broken on its stem, but I will not be trampled on in public as a worthless weed.'

'Nay, my beloved, mistake me not,' returned I—'when the lamb has changed natures with the wolf, then, but not till then, could I breathe a thought, a word in your presence, that I would blush to utter at the gate of Heaven. Within two days, your father and his intended son-in-law will return, and the father's threats and tears will subdue the daughter's purpose. Catherine will be a wife!—Edward a——'

'Speak not impiously,' she cried, imploringly—'what—what can we do?'

'The present moment only is left us,' replied I. 'To-night, become the wife of Edward Fleming, and happiness will be ours.'

Her pulse stood still; the blood rushed into her face and



back to her heart, while her bosom heaved, and her cheeks glowed with the agony of incertitude, as she resolved and re-resolved.

But wherefore should I tire you with a recital of what you already know. That night, my Catherine became my wife. For a few months her father disowned us; but when the fortunes of the Prince began to ripen, through his instrumentality we were again received into his favour. Yet I was grieved to hear, that, in consequence of our marriage, Sir Peter Blakely's mind had become affected; for, while I detested him as a rival, I was compelled to esteem him as a man.

But now, Lewis, comes the misery of my story. You are aware that, before I saw my Catherine, I was a ruined man. Youthful indiscretions—but why call them indiscretions?—rather let me say my headlong sins—before I had well attained the age of manhood, contributed to undermine my estate, and the unhappy political contest in which we were engaged had wrecked it still more. I had ventured all that my follies had left me upon the fortunes of Prince Charles. You know that I bought arms, I kept men ready for the field, I made voyages to France, I assisted others in their distress; and, in doing all this, I anticipated nothing less than an earldom, when the Stuarts should again sit on the throne of their fathers. You had more sagacity, more of this world's wisdom; and you told me I was wrong—that I was involving myself in a labyrinth from which I might never escape. But I thought myself wiser than you. I knew the loyalty and the integrity of my own actions, and with me, at all times, to feel was to act. I had dragged ruin around me, indulging in a vague dream of hope; and now I had obtained the hand of my Catherine, and I had not the courage to inform her that she had wed that of a ruined man.

It was when you and I were at the University together,



that the spirit of gambling threw its deceitful net around me, and my estate was sunk to half its value ere I was of age to enjoy it; the other half I had wrecked in idle schemes for the restoration of the Stuarts. When, therefore, a few weeks after our marriage, I removed with my Catherine to London, I was a beggar, a bankrupt, living in fashionable misery. I became a universal borrower, making new creditors to pacify the clamours of the old, and to hide from my wife the wretchedness of which I had made her a partner. And, O Lewis! the thought that she should discover our poverty, was to me a perpetual agony. It came over the fondest throbbings of my soul like the echo of a funeral bell, for ever pealing its sepulchral boom through the music of bridal joy. I cared not for suffering as it might affect myself; but I could not behold her suffer, and suffer for my sake. I heard words of tenderness fall from her tongue, in accents sweeter than the melody of the lark's evening song, as it chirring descends to fold its wings for the night by the side of its anxious mate. I beheld her smiling to beguile my care, and fondly watching every expression of my countenance, as a mother watches over her sick child; and the half-concealed tear following the smile when her efforts proved unavailing; and my heart smote me that she should weep for me, while her tears, her smiles, and her tenderness, added to my anguish, and I was unable to say in my heart, 'Be comforted.' It could not be affection which made me desirous of concealing our situation from her, but a weakness which makes us unwilling to appear before each other as we really are.

For twelve months I concealed, or thought that I had concealed, the bankruptcy which overwhelmed me as a helmless vessel on a tempestuous sea. But the Prince landed in Scotland, and the war began. I was employed in preparing the way for him in England, and, for a season, wild hopes, that made my brain giddy, rendered me forget-



ful of the misery that had hung over and haunted me. But the brilliant and desperate game was soon over; our cause was lost, and with it my hopes perished; remorse entered my breast, and I trembled in the grasp of ruin. Sir William Forrester effected his escape to France, but his estates were confiscated, and my Catherine was robbed of the inheritance that would have descended to her. With this came another pang, more bitter than the loss of her father's fortune; for he, now a fugitive in a strange land, and unconscious of my condition, had a right to expect assistance from me. The thought dried up my very heart's blood, and made it burn within me—and I fancied I heard my Catherine soliciting me to extend the means of life to her father, which I was no longer able to bestow upon herself: for, with the ruin of our cause, my schemes of borrowing, and of allaying the clamour of creditors, perished.

But it is said that evils come not singly—nor did they so with me; they came as a legion, each more cruel than that which preceded it. Within three weeks after the confiscation of the estates of Sir William Forrester, the individual who held the mortgage upon mine died, and his property passed into the hands—of whom?—heaven and earth! Lewis, I can hardly write it. His property, including the mortgage on my estate, passed into the hands of—Sir Peter Blakely! I could have died a thousand deaths rather than have listened to the tidings. My estate was sunk beyond its value, and now I was at the mercy of the man I had injured—of him I hated. I could not doubt but that, now that I was in his power, he would wring from me his 'pound o' flesh' to the last grain—and he has done it!—the monster has done it! But to proceed with my history.

My Catherine was now a mother, and longer to conceal from her the wretchedness that surrounded us, and was



now ready to overwhelm us, was impossible; yet I lacked the courage, the manliness to acquaint her with it, or prepare her for the coming storm.

But she had penetrated my soul—she had read our condition; and, while I sat by her side buried in gloom, and my soul groaning in agony, she took my hand in hers, and said—

‘Come, dear Edward, conceal nothing from me. If I cannot remove your sorrows, let me share them. I have borne much, but, for you, I can bear more.’

‘What mean ye, Catherine?’ I inquired, in a tone of petulance.

‘My dear husband,’ replied she, with her wonted affection, ‘think not I am ignorant of the sorrow that preys upon your heart. But brood not on poverty as an affliction. You may regain affluence, or you may not; it can neither add to nor diminish my happiness but as it affects you. Only smile upon me, and I will welcome penury. Why think of degradation or of suffering? Nothing is degrading that is virtuous and honest; and where honesty and virtue are, there alone is true nobility, though their owner be a hewer of wood. Believe not that poverty is the foe of affection. The assertion is the oft-repeated, but idle falsehood of those who never loved. I have seen mutual love, joined with content, within the clay walls of humble cotters, rendering their scanty and coarse morsel sweeter than the savoury dainties of the rich; and affection increased, and esteem rose, from the knowledge that they endured privation together, and for each other. No, Edward,’ she added, hiding her face upon my shoulder, ‘think not of suffering. We are young, the world is wide, and Heaven is bountiful. Leave riches to those who envy them, and affection will render the morsel of our industry delicious.’

My first impulse was to press her to my bosom; but



pride and shame mastered me, and, with a troubled voice, I exclaimed—‘Catherine!’

‘O Edward!’ she continued, and her tears burst forth, ‘let us study to understand each other—if I am worthy of being your wife, I am worthy of your confidence.’

I could not reply. I was dumb in admiration, in reverence of virtue and affection of which I felt myself unworthy. A load seemed to fall from my heart, I pressed her lips to mine.

‘Cannot Edward be as happy as his Catherine,’ she continued; ‘we have, at least, enough for the present, and, with frugality, we have enough for years. Come, love, wherefore will you be unhappy? Be you our purser.’ And, endeavouring to smile, she gently placed her purse in my hands.

‘Good Heavens!’ I exclaimed, striking my forehead, and the purse dropped upon the floor; ‘am I reduced to this? Never, Catherine!—never! Let me perish in my penury; but crush me not beneath the weight of my own meanness! Death!—what must you think of me?’

‘Think of you?’ she replied, with a smile, in which affection, playfulness, and sorrow met—‘I did not think that you would refuse to be your poor wife’s banker.’

‘Ah, Catherine!’ cried I, ‘would that I had half your virtue—half your generosity.’

‘The half?’ she answered laughingly—‘have you not the whole? Did I not give you hand and heart—faults and virtues?—and you, cruel man, have lost the half already! Ungenerous Edward!’

‘Oh!’ exclaimed I, ‘may Heaven render me worthy of such a wife!’

‘Come, then,’ returned she, ‘smile upon your Catherine—it is all over now.’

‘What is all over, love?’ inquired I.

‘Oh, nothing, nothing,’ continued she, smiling—‘merely



the difficulty a young husband has in making his wife acquainted with the state of the firm in which she has become a partner.'

'And,' added I, bitterly, 'you find it bankrupt.'

'Nay, nay,' rejoined she, cheerfully, 'not bankrupt; rather say, beginning the world with a small capital. Come, now, dearest, smile, and say you will be cashier to the firm of Fleming & Co.'

'Catherine!—O Catherine!' I exclaimed, and tears filled my eyes.

'Edward!—O Edward!' returned she, laughing, and mimicking my emotion; 'good by, dear—good by!' And, picking up the purse, she dropped it on my knee, and tripped out of the room, adding gaily—

'For still the house affairs would call her hence.'

Fondly as I imagined that I loved Catherine, I had never felt its intensity until now, nor been aware of how deeply she deserved my affection. My indiscretions and misfortunes had taught me the use of money—they had made me to know that it was an indispensable agent in our dealings with the world; but they had not taught me economy. And I do not believe that a course of misery, continued and increasing throughout life, would ever teach this useful and prudent lesson to one of a warm-hearted and sanguine temperament; nor would any power on earth, or in years, enable him to put it in practice, save the daily and endearing example of an affectionate and virtuous wife. I do not mean the influence which all women possess during the oftentimes morbid admiration of what is called a honeymoon; but the deeper and holier power which grows with years, and departs not with grey hairs—in our boyish fancies being embodied, and our young feelings being made tangible, in the never-changing smile of her who was the sun of our early hopes, the spirit of our dreams—and who,



now, as the partner of our fate, ever smiles on us, and, by a thousand attentions, a thousand kindnesses and acts of love, becomes every day dearer and more dear to the heart where it is her only ambition to reign and sit secure in her sovereignty—while her chains are soft as her own bosom, and she spreads her virtues around us, till they become a part of our own being, like an angel stretching his wings over innocence. Such is the power and influence of every woman who is as studious to reform and delight the husband as to secure the lover.

Such was the influence which, I believed, I now felt over my spirit, and which would save me from future folly and from utter ruin. But I was wrong, I was deceived—yes, most wickedly I was deceived. But you shall hear. On examining the purse, I found that it contained between four and five hundred pounds in gold and bills.

‘This,’ thought I, ‘is the wedding present of her father to my poor Catherine, and she has kept it until now! Bless her! Heaven bless her.’

I wandered to and fro across the room, in admiration of her excellence, and my bosom was troubled with a painful sense of my own unworthiness. I had often, when my heart was full, attempted to soothe its feelings by pouring them forth in rhyme. There were writing materials upon the table before me. I sat down—I could think of nothing but my Catherine, and I wrote the following verses

#### TO MY WIFE.

Call woman—angel, goddess, what you will—  
With all that fancy breathes at passion’s call,  
With all that rapture fondly raves—and still  
That one word—WIFE—outvies—contains them all.  
It is a word of music which can fill  
The soul with melody, when sorrows fall  
Round us, like darkness, and her heart alone  
Is all that fate has left to call our own.



Her bosom is a fount of love that swells,  
 Widens, and deepens with its own outpouring,  
 And, as a desert stream, for ever wells  
 Around her husband's heart, when cares devouring  
 Dry up its very blood, and man rebels  
 Against his being!—When despair is lowering,  
 And ills sweep round him, like an angry river,  
 She is his star, his rock of hope for ever.

Yes; woman only knows what 'tis to mourn  
 She only feels how slow the moments glide,  
 Ere those her young heart loved in joy return  
 And breathe affection, smiling by her side.  
 Hers only are the tears that waste and burn—  
 The anxious watchings, and affection's tide  
 That never, never ebbs!—hers are the cares  
 No ear hath heard, and which no bosom shares :

Cares, like her spirit, delicate as light  
 Trembling at early dawn from morning stars;  
 Cares, all unknown to feeling and to sight  
 Of rougher man, whose stormy bosom wars  
 With each fierce passion in its fiery might;  
 Nor deems how look unkind, or absence, jars  
 Affection's silver cords by woman wove,  
 Whose soul, whose business, and whose life is—LOVE.

I left the verses upon the table, that she might find them when she entered, and that they might whisper to her that I at least appreciated her excellence, however little I might have merited it.

Lewis, even in my solitary cell, I feel the blush upon my cheek, when I think upon the next part of my history. My hand trembles to write it, and I cannot now. Methinks that even the cold rocks that surround me laugh at me derision, and I feel myself the vilest of human things. But I cannot describe it to-day—I have gone too far already, and I find that my brain burns. I have conjured up the past, and I would hide myself from its remembrance. Another day, when my brain is cool, when my



hand trembles not, I may tell you all ; but, in the shame of my own debasement, my reason is shaken from its throne."

Here ended the first part of the Hermit's manuscript ; and on another, which ran thus, he had written the words—

"MY HISTORY CONTINUED."

"I told you, Lewis, where I last broke off my history, that I left the verses on the table for the eye of my Catherine. I doubted not that I would devise some plan of matchless wisdom, and that, with the money so unexpectedly come into my possession, I would redeem my broken fortunes. I went out into the streets, taking the purse with me, scarce knowing what I did, but musing on what to do. I met one who had been a fellow-gambler with me, when at the University.

'Ha! Fleming!' he exclaimed, 'is such a man alive! I expected that you and your Prince would have crossed the water together, or that you would have exhibited at Carlisle or Tower Hill.'

He spoke of the run of good fortune he had had on the previous night—for he was a gambler still.) 'Five thousand!' said he, rubbing his hands, 'were mine within five minutes.'

'Five thousand!' I repeated. I took my Catherine's purse in my hand.

Lewis! some demon entered my soul, and extinguished reason. 'Five thousand!' I repeated again; 'it would rescue my Catherine and my child from penury.' I thought of the joy I should feel in placing the money and her purse again in her hands. I accompanied him to the table of destruction. For a time fortune, that it might mock my misery, and not dash the cup from my lips until they were parched, seemed to smile on me. But I will not dwell on



particulars; my friend 'laughed to see the madness rise' within me. I became desperate—nay, I was insane—and all that my wife had put into my hands, to the last coin, was lost. Never, until that moment, did I experience how terrible was the torture of self-reproach, or how fathomless the abyss of human wretchedness. I would have raised my hand against my own life; but, vile and contemptible as I was, I had not enough of the coward within me to accomplish the act. I thought of my mother. She had long disowned me, partly from my follies, and partly that she adhered to the house of Hanover. But, though I had squandered the estates which my father had left me, I knew that she was still rich, and that she intended to bestow her wealth upon my sister; for there were but two of us. Yet I remembered how fondly she had loved me; and I did not think that there was a feeling in a mother's breast that could spurn from her a penitent son—for nature, at the slightest spark, bursteth into a flame. I resolved, therefore, to go as the prodigal in the Scriptures, and to throw myself at her feet, and confess that I had sinned against Heaven, and in her sight.

I wrote a note to my injured Catherine, stating that I was suddenly called away, and that I would not see her again perhaps for some weeks. Almost without a coin in my pocket, I took my journey from London to Cumberland, where my mother dwelt.

Night was gathering around me when I left London, on the road leading to St. Alban's. But I will not go through the stages of my tedious journey; it is sufficient to say, that I allowed myself but little time for sleep or rest, and, on the eighth day after my leaving London, I found myself, after an absence of eighteen years, again upon the grounds of my ancestors. Foot-sore, fatigued, and broken down, my appearance bespoke way-worn dejection. I rather halted than walked along, turning my face aside



from every passenger, and blushing at the thought of recognition. It was mid-day when I reached an eminence, covered with elm trees, and skirted by a hedge of hawthorn. It commanded a view of what was called the Priory, the house in which I was born, and which was situated within a mile from where I stood. The village church, surrounded by a clump of dreary yews, lay immediately at the foot of the hill to my right, and the road leading from thence to the Priory crossed before me. It was a raw and dismal day; the birds sat shivering on the leafless branches, and the cold, black clouds, seemed wedged together in a solid mass, ready to fall upon the earth and crush it; and the wind moaned over the bare fields. Yet, disconsolate as the scene appeared, it was the soil of childhood on which I trod. The fields, the woods, the river, the mountains, the home of infancy, were before me; and I felt their remembered sunshine rekindling in my bosom the feelings that make a patriot. A thousand recollections flashed before me. Already did fancy hear the congratulations of my mother's voice, welcoming her prodigal—feel the warm pressure of her hand, and her joyous tears falling on my cheek. But again I hesitated, and feared that I might be received as an outcast. The wind howled around me—I felt impatient and benumbed—and, as I stood irresolute, with a moaning chime the church bell knelled upon my ear. A trembling and foreboding fell upon my heart; and, before the first echo of the dull sound died in the distance, a muffled peal from the tower of the Priory answered back the invitation of the house of death, announcing that the earth would receive its sacrifice. A veil came over my eyes, the ground swam beneath my feet; and again and again did the church bell issue forth its slow, funeral tone, and again was it answered from the Priory.

Emerging from the thick elms that spread around the Priory and stretched to the gate, appeared a long and



melancholy cavalcade. My eyes became dim with a presentiment of dread, and they were strained to torture. Slowly and silently the sable retinue approached. The waving plumes of the hearse became visible. Every joint in my body trembled with agony, as though agony had become a thing of life. I turned aside to watch it as it passed, and concealed myself behind the hedge. The measured and grating sound of the carriages, the cautious trampling of the horses' feet, and the solemn pace of the poorer followers, became more and more audible on my ear. The air of heaven felt substantial in my throat, and the breathing I endeavoured to suppress became audible, while the cold sweat dropt as icicles from my brow. Sadly, with faces of grief, unlike the expression of hired sorrow, passed the solitary mutes; and, in the countenance of each, I recognised one of our tenantry. Onward moved the hearse and its dismal pageantry. My heart fell, as with a blow, within my bosom. For a moment I would have fancied it a dream; but the train of carriages passed on, their grating roused me from my insensibility, and, rushing from the hedge towards one who for forty years had been a servant in our house—

‘Robert!—Robert!’ I exclaimed, ‘whose funeral is this?’

‘Alack! Master Edward!’ he cried, ‘is it you? It is the funeral of my good lady—your mother!’

The earth swam round with me—the funeral procession, with a sailing motion, seemed to circle me—and I fell with my face upon the ground.

Dejected, way-worn as I was, I accompanied the body of my mother to its last resting-place. I wept over her grave, and returned with the chief mourners to the house of my birth; and there I was all but denied admission. I heard the will read, and in it my name was not once mentioned. I rushed from the house—I knew not, and I cared not



where I ran—misery was before, behind, and around me. I thought of my Catherine and my child, and groaned with the tortures of a lost spirit.

But, as I best could, I returned to London, to fling myself at the feet of my wife, to confess my sins and my follies, to beg her forgiveness, yea, to labour for her with my hands. I approached my own door as a criminal. I shrank from the very gaze of the servant that ushered me in, and I imagined that he looked on me with contempt. But now, Lewis, I come to the last act of my drama, and my hand trembles that it cannot write—my soul is convulsed within me. I thought my Catherine pure, sinless as a spirit of heaven—you thought so—all who beheld her must have thought as I did. But, oh! friend of my youth! mark what follows. I reached her chamber. I entered it—silently I entered it, as one who has guilt following his footsteps. And there, the first object that met my sight—that blasted it—was the man I hated, my former rival, he who held my fortunes in his hand—Sir Peter Blakely! My wife, my Catherine, my spotless Catherine, held him by the arm. O heaven! I heard him say—*'Dear Catherine!'* and she answered him, *'Stay!—stay, my best, my only friend—do not leave me!'*

Lewis! I could see, I could hear no more.

*'Wretch!—villain!'* I exclaimed. They started at my voice. My sword, that had done service in other lands, I still carried with me.

*'Draw! miscreant!'* I cried, almost unconscious of what I said or what I did. He spoke to me, but I heard him not. I sprang upon him, and plunged my sword in his body. My wife rushed towards me. She screamed. I heard the words—*'Dear Edward!'* but I dashed her from me as an unclean thing, and fled from the house.

Every tie that had bound me to existence was severed



asunder. Catherine had snapped in twain the last cord that linked me with happiness. I sought the solitude of the wilderness, and there shouted her name, and now blessed her, and again—but I will go no farther. I long wandered a fugitive throughout the land, and, at length perceiving an apartment in a rock, the base of which Tweed washes with its waters, in it I resolved to bury myself from the world. In it I still am, and mankind fear me.”

Here abruptly ended the manuscript of the Solitary.

A few years after the manuscript had been found, a party, consisting of three gentlemen, a lady, and two children, came to visit the King's Cove, and to them the individual who had found the papers related the story of the hermit.

“But your manuscript is imperfect,” said one of them, “and I shall supply its deficiency. The Solitary mentions having found Sir Peter Blakely in the presence of his wife, and he speaks of words that passed between them. But you shall hear all:—

The wife of Edward Fleming was sitting weeping for his absence, when Sir Peter Blakely was announced. He shook as he entered. She started as she beheld him. She bent her head to conceal her tears, and sorrowfully extended her hand to welcome him.

‘Catherine,’ said he—and he paused, as though he would have called her by the name of her husband—‘I have come to speak with you respecting your father's estate. I was brought up upon it; and there is not a tree, a bush, or a brae within miles, but to me has a tale of happiness and langsyne printed upon it, in the heart's own alphabet. But now the charm that gave music to their whispers is changed. Forgive me, Catherine, but it was you that, as the spirit of the scene, converted everything into a paradise where ye trod, that made it dear to me. It was the hope,



the prayer, and the joy of many years, that I should call you mine—it was this that made the breath of Heaven sweet, and caused sleep to fall upon my eyelids as honey on the lips. But the thought has perished. I was wrong to think that the primrose would flourish on the harvest-field. But, Catherine, your father was my guardian—I was deeply in his debt, for he was to me as a father, and for his sake, and your sake, I have redeemed his property, and it shall be—it is yours.'

Lost in wonder, Catherine was for a few moments silent; but she at length said—

'Generous man, it must not—it shall not be. Bury me not—crush me not beneath a weight of generosity which from you I have been the last to deserve. I could not love, but I have ever esteemed you. I still do. But let not your feelings hurry you into an act of rashness. Time will heal, if it do not efface the wounds which now bleed; and you may still find a heart more worthy of your own, with whom to share the fortune of which you would deprive yourself.'

'Never! never!' cried he; 'little do you understand me. Your image and yours only was stamped where the pulse of life throbs in my heart. The dream that I once cherished is dead now—my grey hairs have awoke me from it. But I shall still be your friend—yea, I will be your husband's friend; and, in memory of the past, your children shall be as my children. Your husband's property is encumbered—throw these in the fire and it is again his.' And, as he spoke, he placed the deeds of the mortgage on a table before her.

'Hear me, noblest and best of friends!' cried Catherine—'hear me as in the presence of our Great Judge. Think not that I feel the less grateful for your generosity, that I solemnly refuse your offers, and adjure you to mention



them not in my presence. As the wife of Edward Fleming, I will not accept what he would spurn. Rather would I toil with the sweat of my brow for the bare crust that furnished us with a scanty meal; and if I thought that, rather than share it with me, he would sigh after the luxuries he has lost, I would say unto him—‘Go, you are free!’ and, hiding myself from the world, weary Heaven with prayers for his prosperity.’

‘Ye talk in vain—as I have said, so it is and shall be,’ added he. ‘And now, farewell, dear Catherine.’

‘Stay! stay!—leave me not thus!’ she exclaimed, and grasped his arm. At that moment her husband returned and entered the room—and you know the rest. But, Sir Peter Blakely was not mortally wounded, as the Solitary believed. In a few months he recovered, and what he had promised to do he accomplished.”

“That is something new,” said the fisherman who had found the manuscript; “and who told ye, or how do ye know?—if it be a fair question.”

“I,” replied he who had spoken, “am the Lewis to whom the paper was addressed.”

“You! you!” exclaimed the fisherman; “well, that beats a’—the like o’ that I never heard before.”

“And I,” said another, “am Sir Peter Blakely—the grey-haired dreamer—who expected the April lily to bloom beneath an October sun.” And he put a crown into the hand of the fisherman.

“And I,” added the third, “am the Solitary himself—this my Catherine, and these my children. He whom I thought dead—dead by my own hand—the man whom I had wronged—sought for me for years, and in this my hermitage that was, he at length found me. It was the grey dawn when I beheld him, and I thought that the ghost of the murdered stood before me. But he spoke—he uttered



words that entered my soul. I trembled in his presence. The load of my guiltiness fell as a weight upon me. I was unable to speak, almost to move. He took my hand and led me forth as a child. In my confusion the papers which you found were left behind me. And now, when happiness has shed its light around me, I have come with my benefactor, my friend, my Catherine, and my children, to view the cell of my penitence."



## THE MAIDEN FEAST OF CAIRNKIBBIE.

HE who has been present at a real Maiden, or Scotch feast of harvest-home, if it should happen that he belongs to the caste that makes the light fantastic toe the fulcrum of the elegant motions of the quadrille, and Hogarth's line of beauty the test of the evolutions of modern grace, might wish that the three sisters had long ago resigned their patronage of the art of dancing, and left the limbs of man, and their motions, to the sole power of the spirit of fun and good humour. Centuries have passed away since first the Maiden called forth the salient energies of the harvest-weary hinds and rosy-cheeked damsels of Scotland. We have only now amongst us the ghost of the old spirit-stirring genius of "the farmer's ha'." The modern vintage feast is only a shadow of the old *Cerealia*—the festival of festivals, as it has been called—at which the young and the old of ancient Greece and Rome resigned themselves to the power of the rosy god, and the *nil placet sine fructu* was seen in every bright eye, heard in every glad voice, and listened to in every tripping measure. The Scotch Maiden was once what the vintage feasts of the Continent were, and still are. The hinds and maids of one "town" were present at the harvest-home of another; reciprocal visits kept up the spirit of the enjoyment; the fields and farmers' ha's resounded with the merry pipe; the whirling reel mixed up the dancers in its "uniform confusion;" the flowing bicker was "filled and kept fou;" kisses, "long and loud," vindicated a place in the world of musical sound; and the Genius of Pleasure ran away with heart and soul to her happy regions—declaring that, for one solitary



night in the year, the power of sorrow should have no authority over mournful man. The Maiden of Cairnkibbie, a farm on the property of Faulden—too long ago for the mention of a specific period, but while Maidens (to descend to a pun) were still in the height of their beauty and bloom—was one of the most joyous scenes that ever graced the green, or made the rafters of the barn ring with “hey and how rohumbelow.” The farmer, William Hume—some far-off friend of the Paxton family—was rich, as things went in those days; and a gaucy dame, and a fair daughter, Lilly, blessed him with affection and duty. No lass ever graced a Maiden like Lilly Hume; and no free farmer’s wife ever extended so hearty a patronage to the feast of fun as did the sleek and comfortable guidwife of Cairnkibbie. The pretty “damysell” was as jimp as “gillie”—

“As ony rose her rude was red,  
Her lire was like the lillie.”

and far and near she defied all manner of bold competition in those charms that go to deck the blooming maids of Scotland. Natural affection made her the pride of her parents; and a simplicity that did not seem to have art enough to tell her of her own beauty, endeared her to those who might have been expected to have been smitten with envy, or crossed with a hopeless passion.

There was many a lass “as myld as meid” at the Maiden of Cairnkibbie, and many a Jock, and Steenie, and Robyne, as braw as yellow locks brushed bolt upright in the face of heaven could make any of God’s creatures. But many of the merry-makers did not trust to such ornaments of nature: for Steenie Thornton, from the town of Kelton, the gay lover of Jess Swan from the same town, had his locks tied behind with a yellow ribbon got from her fair hand, and his “pumps” boasted the same decoration; the sprightly Will Aitken, the best hand at a



morris-dance in all the Merse, had his jacket "browden" with "fowth o' roses" stuck into the button-holes by Jean Gillies from Westertown; the fiercest wrestler of the Borders, Jock Hedderick, who cherished Bess Gibson, pushed forward his bold breast, to exhibit to the goggle eyes of wondering admiration a vest sewed by her delicate fingers at intervals stolen from cheese-making; and Pat Birrel, the noted scaumer, who was accounted more than "twa hen clokkis" by Kirsty Glen the henwife's daughter of Earlston, lifted his feet high in mid-air, to shew the gushets in his hose wrought by her lily hands. Nor did the screechin gilpies lack ornaments to set off their fair persons. Some had bright yellow gloves of "raffal right;" and many, with kirtles of "Lincome light, weel prest wi' mony plaits," pulled the trains in most menacing bundles through the pocket-holes, to shew at once how bright were their colours, and how many a "breid" was wasted in their amplitude. Many had ornaments that tongue could not describe—because they were the first of their kind, and required a new vocabulary to do justice to their beauties. But, ornamented or plain, the revellers were all alike filled with the spirit of the Maiden; and, if their "Tam Lutar," the piper, did not skirl them up to the point of enjoyment to which they all struggled, and danced, and drank, and screamed to get, sure it was that no fault was attributable to the merry-makers themselves: nor was the guidman's daughter, Lilly Hume, less joyous than the merriest. Although at her father's harvest-feast she was accounted a lady, she was the humblest of the "hail menyie;" and never refused to draw up through her pocket-holes the ends of her falling yellow kirtle, as a preparation for another reel, at the supplicatory bend or bow of the humblest hind, albeit he was adorned with neither bright crimson nor ochre yellow.

The "Tam Lutar" of the feast—a blind piper, who be-



gan to play when he first felt the incipient effects of the first bicker, blew stronger as the fumes of the potations rose higher, declined as the liquid impulse fell, and even stopped when the drink entirely sunk—was well supplied with the “piper’s coig,” a girded vessel of jolly good ale, that lay beside him, and was ever and anon filled, as the dancers felt the music beginning to lag in spirit. Away they flew, to the airs of “Gillquhisker,” “Brum on tul,” “Tortee Solee Lemendow,” and other good old tunes, now forgotten, though their names are mentioned by Sir James Ingles; the resilent heels spurned the earth; the fore part of the foot, where the spring lies, dealt out those tremendous thuds on the suffering floor which heretofore were reckoned the true and legitimate soul of dancing, and now, alas! displaced by the sickly *slip* of the French grace; the “dancing whoop” rung around, inspired every soul, and lightened every heel; Jock Splaefut “bobbitt up wi’ bends;” and Jenny set to him, and “beckit,” and set again, and turned, and away glided through the mazes of the reel—

“For reeling there nicht nae wench rest;”

and came back, and set and “beckit” again; till, “forfochtin faynt” with pure dancing toil, the reelers gave place to the country dancers, who toiled and *swat* in the same degree for the period of their sweet labours. Then was the breathing time in the far corners appropriated to the cooling tankard, the dew of which left on the panting lips ran a considerable risk of being dried up by the heat of love, elicited from the kiss that smacked of love and ale.

At a corner in the end of the room, a crowd had collected; and some high words were passing between Will Aitken and Jock Hedderick, on a question that seemed to interest the dancers. Those standing about were washing down large mouthfuls of bannocks by draughts of strong beer, while they wiped the sweat from their brows, and



listened to the subject in dispute. At intervals some one was heard at the door, playing and singing.

“He played sae schill, an’ sang sae sweet,”

that Lilly Hume felt interested in the musician. He was a beggar, who boldly claimed admittance to the Maiden, by what he called the “auld rights o’ the gaberlunzies of Scotland,” who were declared entitled to enter into the feast of the harvest home, to dance thereat, and drink thereat, and kiss the “damysells” thereat, with as much freedom as the gayest guest. This demand was resisted by Jock Hedderick, who besides disputed the authority of the ancient custom; which, on the other hand, was upheld by Will Aitken, whose supple tongue was so powerful over his opponents that

“He muddelt them down like ony mice;”

and, notwithstanding the terror of the scaumer’s arm, prevailed upon the guidman and the company to hold sacred the rights of hospitality of the land, and admit the “pauky auld carle,” with his pipes and his wallets. As soon as the decision was given, Lilly ran to the door, and, taking the gaberlunzie by the hand, brought him in. A loud laugh resounded throughout the room, to the profit of the proud and merry dancers, and at the expense of the jolly beggar, who, young and stalwart, and borne down by sundry appendages, containing doubtless meal and bread, “cauk and keil,” “spindles and quhorles,” and all the et-ceteras of the wallet, stood before them, and raised in return such a ranting, roaring laugh, as well apparently at himself as his company, that, by that one effort of his lungs, he made more friends than many a laughter-loving pot companion might make in a year. Then in an instant he struck this merry-maker on the back, and slapped that on the shoulder, and kissed the skirling kitties with such a jolly and hearty spirit of free salutation, that he even



added flame to the already burning passion of frolic, and raised again the rafter-shaking laugh, till it drowned all the energies of Lutar himself, albeit his coig had that instant been filled.

But this was only vanity, while the stomach of the jolly gaberlunzie was as yet empty. A large stoup was brought to him by Will Carr, a good-looking young man of gentle demeanour, the only person who in that pairing assembly seemed to want his "dow." A shade of melancholy was on his cheek, and, as he offered the gaberlunzie the stoup, he cast an eye on Lilly, the meaning of which seemed to be read in an instant by the beggar.

"Ha! ha!" cried the latter; "ye are the true welcomer, my braw youth. Thae wild chiels an' their glaiket hizzies wad fill the beggar wi' the sound o' his ain laugh, as it he were a pair o' walking bagpipes. But, ho, man, this is sour yill.

The bridegroom brought a pint of ale,  
And bade the piper drink it.

'Drink it?' quoth he, 'and it so staile;  
Ashrew me, if I think it!'

Ye've anither barrel in the corner yonder—awa!—the beggar maun hae the best.

This Maiden nicht it is his right,  
And, faith he winna blink it."

And so he cadgily ranted and sang, swearing that the best ale and the prettiest lips in the whole house should that night be at his command.

While Will Carr brought him ale out of another cask, Lilly Hume took away his wallets, and laid them in a window-sole at his back. Having taken a waught of the ale so long that the bystanders looked on with fear, lest he might never recover his breath again, he returned the stoup empty to Will, telling him to fill it again, as he intended to assist the legitimate Lutar in blowing up the spirits of the company—a work which would require



“fowth o’ yill.” Without farther preface, he blew up his bags with a skirl that seemed to shake the house, and, dashing fearlessly into the time, poured so much joyous sound into the thick air of the heated apartment, that the weary-limbed dancers threw off their languor, and fell to it again with a spirit that equalled that of their first off-set. But his musical occupation did not prevent his attention to the looks and actions of Lilly Hume and Will Carr.

“How dinna ye dance, hinny?” said he, in a low voice to Lilly. “How dinna ye dance, man?” he repeated, as he turned his head to Will. “Think ye yer sittin there’s a compliment to me, wha am blawing awa my lungs here, for the very purpose o’ makin ye dance?”

The two young people looked at each other, and then at the guidman, who sat at a little distance.

“Tell me the reason, my bonny hinny,” he added; and, as he blew again, leant his ear to hear the answer. “Eh! come now, my white lily,” he persisted. “I’m a safe carle, and can spae fortunes as well as blaw up thae green bags wi’ thriftless wind. I may tell ye o’ a braw lot, if ye’ll only open yer lips and gie me some o’ yer secrets.”

“My faither winna let me dance wi’ Will Carr,” at last replied Lilly, blushing from ear to ear.

“How! how!” answered the gaberlunzie, taking the pipes suddenly frae his mouth—“no let ye dance wi’ a decent callant, the bonniest hensure o’ the hail menyie! What crime has he committed, hinny? Eh?”

“He’s puir,” answered Lilly, innocently.

“Ha! a red crime that, Lilly,” answered he; “if he had killed a score o’ God’s creatures in a Border raid, he might hae been forgi’en; but wha forgies poverty? But do ye like Will Carr, hinny?”

“My faither and mither say sae,” answered Lilly.



“Ay, ay,—I see whar the wind blaws,” said the gaberlunzie. “But ye *will* dance wi’ him. I, as a beggar, hae a richt to the fairest hand o’ the maiden—yer faither daurna refuse ye to me; an’ let Will tak yon quean wi’ the yellow ribbons in her wimple, an’ we’ll a’ mix in ae reel. Will, man, awa an’ ask yon bloomin hizzy wi’ the rose rude to dance wi’ ye.”

Will obeyed; and the beggar, having brought the tune to a termination, stepped boldly up into the middle of the floor, holding by the hand the fair Lilly Hume; while Will, with his blushing quean, Bess Gordon, took their stations opposite.

“Up wi’ the ‘Hunts o’ Cheviot,’ Tam,” cried the beggar; “an blaw as if ye wad blaw yer last. Gie him yill there, an’ I’ll play for him a hail hour, if he gars the roof-tree o’ Cairnkibbie dirl to the gaberlunzie’s dance.”

The expectation of a merry bout brought others to the floor, and even the guidman and guidwife of Cairnkibbie, themselves, rose and “buckled to the wark,” as cleverly as the youngest gipsy of the whole assembly. Then up blew the “Hunts o’ Cheviot,” in the quickest of Tam’s ale-inspired manner, and away banged the jolly gaberlunzie, as if the spirit of Cybele’s priests had seized his heart; “and like a lyon lap,” as if he would have foreleeted Lightfute himself, and “counterfeited Frans.” He clapped his hands, till the echoes came back from the roof; and the exhilarating hoogh! hoogh! which can only be given forth by the throat of a Scotchman, when good liquor has wet it and fired the brain that moves it, was heard by every ear, and felt by every heart. The very piper was delighted with the ranting chield, and ever, as his clap and hoogh! hoogh! resounded through the barn, the yells of the pipes seemed to rise higher and higher, and echoes of the same sounds came from the imitative spirits of the dancers.



"Hurra for the gaberlunzie!" shouted Will Aitken.

"The jolly beggar, for ever!" cried Steenie Thornton; and the smiles of the hizzies, and occasional slaps on the back, administered to the jolly roisterer, as they met and passed him in the midst of the reel, testified their most perfect satisfaction with the king of his tribe.

"Here, Will, here man," whispered the beggar, as he rioted in his wild humour, and twirled Will Carr about to face Lilly, while he left her for Bess Gordon. "Set to her, man, and dinna spare a kiss and a good squeeze o' her hand, as ye see the auld anes' backs to ye."

And then he drowned his remark with his hoogh! hoogh! sprung up yard high, and clapped his knees opposite the blooming Bess, who would not have given her jolly new partner for a' the Will Carrs in Scotland.

"Change the measure, Tam," cried the beggar, as he foresaw the termination of "The Hunts of Cheviot." "Up wi' 'King William's Note,' man. Fill his coig, ye lazy loons! Noo, Tam!—hoogh! hoogh!—there up yet, higher and higher, man—hoogh, hoogh!"

The piper felt the inspiration, up mounted the notes to the highest and liveliest measure, and away again flew the merry dancers under all the impulse of the new tune. The clap on the beggar's knee ever and anon run along, and still he twirled round Will Carr to face Lilly—though not before he had taken her round the fair neck, and kissed her, "nothing loath"—and again presented himself to the welcome face of Bess, whose rosy lips he "pree'd" as often as his many laborious evolutions, hooghs, claps, and cries to the piper would permit. He even made *tacks* to the side reels, and, laying hold of the damsels of his neighbours, kissed them from lug to lug, and then came back with a roar of laughter behind him, to greet of new Bess Gordon, to whom he seemed more welcome for his gallantry. The guidwife of Cairnkibbie herself was violently laid hold of



round the neck and saluted with a loud smack, which, sounding in the ears of the guidman, produced a hearty laugh at the boldness, which was excused by the reckless jollity of the extraordinary gaberlunzie. Nor did he yet allow them to flag.

“Keep at it, Will!” he cried to the young man. “Ye’ll hae aneuch o’ Lilly for ae nicht, or my name’s no Wat Wilson. Aneuch o’ ‘King William’s Note,’ Tam. Come awa wi’ anither—‘In Simmer I mawed my meadow,’ wi’ double quick time. Look to his bicker there, ye culroun knaves, wha’ll neither dance, drink, nor mak drink!”

The piper heard the appeal, and struck up the new tune with great glee—

“Gude Lord, how he did lans!”

And again the inspiring strain, coming in a new measure, filled the dancers with new energies. There never had been such a reel since ever reels were danced. Heaven knows how long it had lasted, and yet the performers felt no weariness, all through the inspiring devilry, as they termed it, of the gaberlunzie, whose war-cry was as loud and uproarious as ever, and his leaps in the air as high as they had been at the first off-go. He now played off a new trick. He twirled round the partner of the next reel, and made him take his place before Bess Gordon, while he, ambitious of a new face, took the place of his neighbour, and continued the sport in his new locality and company. Bess regretted her change; but his new position was soon changed, for he played the same trick with the next reel-ing party, and so on through the whole four—for such was the number up at once; and he continued to “pree the mou’s” of every young maiden on the floor, and, returning with many a hoogh, and clap, and leap to his old position, he seemed inclined to keep up the sport till the elder dancers should drop to the ground with sheer fatigue. It seemed to the guidman of Cairnkibbie that there was no



remedy but a nod to Piper Tam, who, himself almost blown out, observed with pleasure the master's indication, and stopped the music even in the very midst of the leaping joy of the interminable gaberlunzie, who would have danced apparently till next moon, if he could have got any one strong enough and willing enough to dance with him.

He was now a universal favourite; all flocked round him as he wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and declared they had never seen such a spirited dancer before. His name, Wat Wilson, flew through the barn, and every one wondered how they had never seen such a jolly beggar in those parts before. But Wat said nothing of his *unde*, his *ubi*, or his *quo*; he only drank to the crowd around him; and, with Lilly on one side of him, and Will Carr on the other, he seized again his own pipes, and, forcing Tam to his feet, and crying to a new party to start, struck up one of the liveliest airs that the folks of the Merse had ever heard. In an instant again the barn was resounding with mirth; his strains were irresistible.

“Then all the wenches te he they playit,  
And loud as Will Aitken leuche;  
But nane cried, Gossip, hyn your gaits,  
For we have dansit aneugh.”

At least none cried they had danced enough while the beggar played; for the very heels seemed to obey the influence of his spirit, as if they had been gifted with some power of sympathy, independently of the bodies to which they were attached. The dance was kept up till the dancers tired—for the beggar's lungs were as tough as his feet; and when all had, for a time, tired of dancing, they assembled round their guest, who, of his own accord, struck up many a ranting song, and, by his humour, made the laugh resound through the barn. So fond grew they of his song and his jokes, that they felt no inclination, for a time, to resume



again the dance. They drank and laughed, and screamed at every new sally of his wit, and every humorous turn of his song; and no one knows how long this scene might have lasted—for the gaberlunzie seemed inexhaustible—when a sound of horses' feet at the door claimed the attention of the revellers, and some one cried out that a party of horsemen were come to demand the body of a thief, who had that day, at Dunse, stolen the silver mace of King James, and was suspected to be at this Maiden, under the assumed dress of a wandering piper.

"That is the man," cried a belted knight, as, having dismounted, he trod forward into the middle of the barn, and pointed to the happy gaberlunzie, who had that instant finished his song.

"Ye lee," answered the beggar, in an instant, as he stood up, surrounded by his friends.

"Ha, sirrah!" answered the stranger, "this boldness will avail thee nothing. I know thee; and these, thy new-made friends, will not save thee from the execution of our orders. There are witnesses against thee, who saw thee steal the silver mace. Forward, ye sooth-saying men!"

Two men entered, dressed nearly in the same style as the first, and bearing all the marks and insignia of the grade of Knights.

"Is not this the thief?" inquired the first.

"It is—we will swear to him. He snatched the mace from the royal mace-bearer, in the streets of Dunse, and made off with it amidst the hue and cry of the populace, whose speed he outran as he would that of the greyhound."

"Guid faith," replied the guidman of Cairnkibbie, "if our friend ran as cleverly as he has danced this nicht, a' the greyhounds o' the Merse wadna hae caught him."

"Will ye gie me up to the beadles, freends," cried the



beggar, "or will ye stand by him wha has sought yer protection, and partaken o' yer hospitality?"

"Gie ye up!" ejaculated the spirited old farmer; "in faith, na. If King Jamie war the Cham o' Tartary, or had three kings' heads on his shouthers in place o' ane, we'll defend ye while there's a flail in the barn o' Cairnkibbie."

A shout of approbation followed the speech of the old farmer. The maidens, whose chins still smarted from the rub of his jolly beard, flew for flail, and rung, and "hissil ryss," and in an instant every willing hand held a weapon.

"We'll defend him to the last drap o' oor bluid," cried Will Carr, as he manfully stood forward, and brandished a huge hazel rung.

"And, by my saul," cried the scaumer, Jock Hedderick; "if we fecht as he'll fecht, whether for auld feid or new, noytit pows and broken banes will tell the fortune o' the nicht, lang before the play's played."

"Ha, ha! guidmen, and true guidmen, and true!" cried the beggar, undaunted and laughing; "thank ye, my hinny, Lilly, for this green kevel! By the haly rude, come on now, ye silver-necklaced bull-dogs o' royalty:—

' The beggar was o' manly mak,  
To meet him was nae mows,  
There darena ten come him to tak  
Sae noyt will be their pows.'

Ye should ken that sang, if ye hae lear aneugh in your steel-bound noddles. Come on, ye calroun caitiffs!"

"Search his wallet," cried the foremost of the strangers; and six or seven men rushed into the barn, and made direct for the window-sole pointed to by the chief; but Will Swan and Will Carr, with half a dozen more stout hensures, flew forward and anticipated the searchers.

"Give me my meal-pocks," cried the gaberlunzie; and, having got hold of his wallet, he slung it over his shoulders, and, to the surprise of every one, took out the mace said



to have been stolen, and, holding it in his left hand as a badge of his authority, continued, laughing like a cadger, to gibe the strangers—

“Beggars hae a king as weel as belted bannerets,” he cried: “see ye my badge? Ken ye wha ye seek? Heard ye ne’er o’ Wat Wilson the king o’ the beggars, crowned on Hogmanay, on the Warlock’s Hill near Dunse, in presence o’ a’ the tribe o’ kaukers and keelars, collected from Berwick to Lerwick. This is the beggar’s badge. Tak it if ye dare. By ae wag o’t, yer bairns will be kidnapped, your kye yeld, and your mithers’ banes stricken wi’ the black sickness.”

“Guidman of Cairnkibbie,” said the foremost knight, “thou hast now evidence in that bold beggar’s own hand, that he hath stolen a part of the king’s regalia—an act of high treason, incurring death to him and all that give him shelter. Take the badge, examine it, and thou’lt find on it the royal arms. See to thy predicament. If I report a rescue, thou’rt ruined. James will punish thee as a resetter. These misguided men will fall in thy ruin, and sorely wilt thou repent having harboured and defended a thief and a vagabond. Wilt thou give him up, or must we take him at the expense of our blood and thine?”

“A’ fair words,” answered the guidman; “but this beggar is our guest. He says the badge is his ain, and truly I am bound to say that King Jamie himsel is nae mair like the king o’ this auld land, than this jolly gaberlunzie is like the king o’ his tribe. Every inch o’m’s a king. He sings like a king, dances like a king, drinks like a king, and kisses the lasses like a king—and, king as he is, feth we’ll be his loyal subjects. What say ye, guid hearts?”

“The same, the same,” cried many voices; and a brandishing of flails and kevels showed that they were determined to act up to their pledge of defending the jolly



gaberlunzie to the end. Matters now assumed a serious aspect.

“Thy ruin be on thine own heads!” cried the chief of the strangers. “Draw for the rights of King James, claim our prisoner, and take him through the blood of rebels who dispute the authority of their king!”

The men from without now began to rush into the barn with drawn swords; and seemed to expect that, when the steel was made apparent, no serious resistance would be offered. Their expectation, however, was vain; for the hinds did not seem to fear the naked swords, and several of them had already aimed blows at the heads of the enemy. The beggar was moving to the right and to the left with great rapidity; brandishing his huge kevel, and whispering something into the ears of his friends. The guidman was busy getting the women removed by a back door; and, in the midst of all the uproar, there seemed some scheme in operation on the part of the defenders, which would either co-operate with their warlike defence, or render the shedding of blood unnecessary. The assailants clearly did not wish to use the glittering thirsty blades; and continued to ward off the blows of the hinds, and to push them back, with a view to get hold of him who was the object of their search. He, in the meantime, was directing some secret operation with great adroitness and spirit. The confusion increased; the size of the barn, and the pressure of the assailants forward, apparently with a view to take away the power of the long sticks, prevented in a great measure the full play of the hinds' arms, and some of the king's men were engaged in a powerful wrestle, with the intention of disarming the hinds, and thus achieving a victory without loss of blood; but their efforts in this respect would have been attended with small success, if the tactics of the beggar had been a deadly contest. The assailants still pushed on, and it seemed that their op-



ponents were fast receding, while the clanging of sticks on the swords, and the hard breathing and cries of those engaged, seemed to indicate a severe and equally contested strife. The defendants were latterly pushed up to the very farthest end of the apartment, and it seemed apparent that, if they did not make a great effort to redeem their position, and acquire room for the circle of their staves, they must resign the contest. But an extraordinary evolution was now performed. The back door was opened; in an instant, every hind disappeared from the faces of their foes; the door was locked and bolted; and the king's men turned to retrace their steps and seek the enemy outside. That turn exposed their position, and the trick of the gaberlunzie. The front door was also shut, locked, and riveted. On every side they were shut in, confined in a dark barn, and all means of escape entirely cut off. It was in vain that they roared through the key-holes of the doors. The gaberlunzie, who regulated all the motions of the successful party, responded to them in words of cutting irony, and even set agoing the swelling notes of his pipes, to celebrate his triumph by a pœan in the form of a pibroch.

“Ye may tell yer king,” he cried, loud enough for them to hear—“that is, when ye get out, if ye ever experience that blessed fortune—that he is not the only king in these realms. And surely Scotland is wide enough for twa. I hae my subjects, he has his; an’ Wat Wilson’s no the potentate that wad ever interfere wi’ Jamie Stuart, if Jamie Stuart will let alane Wat Wilson. If I happen to pass Dunse on the morn, I shanna fail to report favourably o’ yer prowess; an’, abune a’, I shall tell him o’ the condition o’ his belted knichts—how,

‘There was not ane o’ them that day  
 Could do ane ither’s bidden,  
 And there lie three and thretty knights  
 Thrunland in ane midden,’



Come now, my friends, we'll adjourn the feast to the ha', an' let the knights tak their nicht's rest in the barn, after a' the toil o' their desperate battle."

A loud shout responded to the spirited speech of the gaberlunzie; and the feelings of the kidnapped and discomfited men-at-arms, on hearing the triumph of the beggar, who had out-manœuvred them, may be conceived, but could not well be expressed by an ordinary goose-quill. The guidman of Cairnkibbie took as hearty a laugh as the rest, at the trick thus successfully played off upon the king's men, and his laugh was nothing the less for the quantity of good ale he had drank before the fray began, and without which potation, perhaps, he would not have patronised an act which might bring him into trouble. There was one thing that, even through the fumes of the ale, struck him as very remarkable—the confined knights made scarcely any noise. There was no blustering or swearing of vengeance, nor threat of the king's displeasure, nor endeavours to break the doors. They submitted to their durance like lambs in a sheepfold, and seemed to have lost their spirits as well as courage, when they found themselves completely within the power of their enemy. What could this mean? There was a mystery in it, which the farmer, who was an arch old fox, could not explain; and when he put a question to the gaberlunzie, the answer increased his difficulty, for the beggar laughed, and attributed the quietness and meekness of the foes to the terror of his prowess, and the awe which his name inspired throughout a great part of Scotland.

"This is the most extraordinary deevil," said the farmer to himself, "that it has been my fortune to meet. His dancing, roaring, rioting, drinking, piping, singing, joking, fechtin', seem a' on a par; an' nane o' them are beat by his power o' winning the hearts o' young an' auld. He has forced me to like him, will I or nill I; an' my dochter



Lilly, an' my guidwife Jean, are nae less fond o' him than I am. Here, noo, is our Maiden broken up, my barn made a warhold, mysel a seneschal o' the king's troops, my head in a loop, an' my fortunes hanging in the wind o' the royal displeasure—a' brocht aboot by a wanderin beggar, wha forced himsel into oor happy meeting at the very point o' the bauldest tongue that ever hung in man's head; an' yet sae supple that it has won the very hearts o' the men that strove to keep him oot, an' brocht me into the hardest scrape I ever was in my life."

Cogitating in this prudential way, the guidman was fast coming to the conclusion that he was in a position of great danger; and that it was necessary that he should take the proper steps for freeing himself from the consequences of his imprudence as soon as it was possible. He turned round to look for the gaberlunzie, that he might commune with him on the prudence of letting the king's men free. The greater number of the men and women had gone into the house; and some of them stood at a distance, their forms revealed by a glimpse of the moon, which, freed from a cloud, began to illumine the holms of Cairnkibbie.

"Where is the beggar?" inquired the farmer at Will Carr.

"Where is the beggar?" cried Will Carr to his neighbour.

"Where is the gaberlunzie?" shouted several voices at once.

The gaberlunzie was gone. Steenie Thornton said he saw a person mount one of the troopers' horses that stood at the door of the barn, and, turning round the corner of the steading, gallop off at the top of his speed. He thought it was one of the hinds, who was trying the mettle of the king's horses, and would return instantly, after he had indulged himself with a ride. Now it was apparent to all that it was the strange gaberlunzie himself. He had



crowned all his extraordinary actions of the evening by stealing one of the horses of the king, or his knights, and, with meal-pocks, wallet, pipes, and stolen mace, was "owre the Borders and awa," and might never be seen or heard of again; while the farmer, who now saw the extent of his danger, must stand the brunt of the king's vengeance, and be tried for forcing the king's messengers in the execution of their duty, for shutting them up in his barn, and stealing (for he would be charged with it) one of the horses, the property of his sovereign. The whole company now assembled around the farmer, whose position was apparent to the bluntest hind that ever danced at a Maiden. Some proposed to follow the beggar, and bring him back again; but he had already exhibited such a power of locomotive energy and daring spirit in the former adventures of the evening, that it seemed vain to attempt to overtake him with the quickest steed that was at their command. The difficulty was great, and, apparently, insuperable; and the whole scene enacted by the gaberlunzie appeared like a dream. The farmer swore against him mighty oaths, and directed against himself a part of the objurgatory declamation. But how was he to get out of the scrape? If the doors were opened, and the armed knights let loose, the whole company might be slaughtered, in the fury of the enraged men-at-arms, who would attribute to the farmer and his men their discomfiture, the loss of the thief, their confinement, and the loss of the horse. To keep them confined was also a fearful resource; for they must be let out *some time*, and every minute of their confinement would add fuel to the flame of their resentment. Many opinions were given. Some were for getting assistance to enable them to stand on the defensive, against the expected attack, on the knights being let free. Some again were for striking a bargain "wi' the fou hand," as the saying goes, and letting the



pursuers free, upon their word of a knight that they would not molest them. This latter plan seemed the best; and a good addendum was made by the greatest simpleton of the whole meeting—viz., that they should include in this act of amnesty the loss of the horse. The farmer proceeded to act upon this resolution.

“We are friendly inclined to ye,” said he, in a tone of voice that might reach the prisoners. “Your enemy was that accursed gaberlunzie, wha maun be the very deevil himsel; for he it was wha blew us up against ye, and made us, a parcel o’ quiet men, fecht against the servants o’ our lawfu king. The cunning rogue’s awa, and left us to bear the dirdum o’ his feint or folly; and, a’ ungeared as we are for war, we wish, withoot either dewyss or devilry, to ken the condition upon which ye will get yer liberty.”

A loud laugh from within was the reply to this speech. What next could this mean? The farmer was confounded, the hinds stared, and every one looked at another. Here were men who five minutes before were fighting like fiends, who had been deceived and confined, struck and ill-used, indulging in a good jolly laugh at the broaching of a question concerning their liberty. The mystery was increased, the affair was more extraordinary, the development more difficult and distant.

“Ay, ay,” continued the farmer, “ye may laugh; but, maybe, the laugh may be on the ither side when ye get oot. This may be an assumed guid nature, to blind us. I’m as far ben as ye, though no in the barn. Come, come. It is a serious affair. Will ye pledge the honour o’ a knight, that, if I draw the bolts, ye’ll let alane for let alane?”

“Surely, surely,” was the ready reply, and another laugh accompanied the condition.

“Right merry prisoners, by my saul!” continued the



farmer. "Will they laugh at the loss o' their horse, I wonder?" (To his friends.)

"That's a' very weel," he continued, in a higher voice. "I hae witnesses here to the pledge; but I'm sorry to inform ye that that deevil o' a beggar, wha stole yer king's mace, is aff and awa, the Lord kens whaur, wi' the best horse o' a' yer cavalcade. Will ye forgie this to the boot?"

Another burst of laughter responded from the barn, mixed with cries of—

"Ay, ay; never mind the horse. Let him go with the mace. The king of the beggars deserveth a steed."

"Weel, these are the maist pleasant faes I ever saw," said the farmer; "but I hae a' my fears there's a decoy duck i' the pond. Haud firm yer kevels, friends, in case a' this guid nature may, like the blink o' an autumn sun, be followed by the fire-flaughts o' their revenge."

The men stood prepared to fight, if necessary; the bolts were withdrawn, and out came the knights, as merry as larks, making the air resound with their laughter. The farmer and his friends were still more amazed, as, for their very souls, they could see nothing in discomfiture and imprisonment to make any man laugh. But the fact was now certain, that the prisoners were right glad and hearty; and the sincerity of their good humour was to be tested in a manner that seemed as extraordinary as anything that had yet been witnessed on this eventful evening. Not one of them ever mentioned the beggar or the loss of the horse—a circumstance remarkable enough; and, not contented with this scrupulous regard of the treaty, the chief of them, slapping the farmer on the back, proposed that, as they had so unceremoniously broken up the sports of the evening, they should not depart till they saw the dancing again commenced, and till they each and every man of them should dance a reel with the blooming maidens they had seen on their entry. This request, though as remark-



able as the former proceedings, was received with loud applause. The parties were again collected; Tam the piper again took his seat; the ale flowed in its former abundance; and in a short time the brave knights were seen tripping it gaily through the mazes of the merry dance. This was another change of the moral peristrepthic panorama of that extraordinary evening; and, as the farmer looked at the merry knights with their surtouts of green, and their buff baldricks and clanging swords, busy dancing in that very barn where they had, a few minutes before, been fighting like Turks, he held up his hands in wonder, and would have moralised on the chances and changes of life, if a barn had been a proper place, a Maiden a proper occasion, and the hour of relief from a great evil a proper time for the indulgence of such fancies.

The knights danced only for a very short time; and there can be no doubt that they did their best to please themselves, and to exhibit to their host and his friends the greatest triumphs of the gay art; but all their efforts only tended to bring into higher contrast their best and most intricate evolutions, their highest and most joyous humours, their pleasantest and merriest tricks, with the devil-daring, jumping, roaring, laughing, kissing, and hugging of the jolly gaberlunzie, who outran all competitors in the production of fun, as much as ever did an Arab steed the plough-nag at a fair gallop. There was not a knight among them that could, as the saying goeth, "hold the candle to him;" and as for the private opinions of the "damysells," the very best judges of the properties of man, they would not have given one hair in the beard of the jolly gaberlunzie for all the short crops of the chins of all the knights put together. His thefts and vagaries were lost, like spots on the sun, in the blaze of his convivial splendour; and, coming and flying off like a comet, as he had done, he had left them in a darkness which all the tiny lights of the



good-natured crew of bannerets could not illumine beyond the twinkle that only served to exhibit more clearly their gloom. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*—they might never see his like again.

The knights, after enjoying themselves in the manner we have mentioned, mounted their horses, (the one whose steed was stolen, having borrowed one from the farmer,) and having been supplied with a good stirrup-cup, galloped away, without ever having said one word, either of good or evil, of the mysterious gaberlunzie of whom they came in search. The Maiden was finished soon after, and the guidman of Cairnkibbie retired with his guidwife to rest, and in their waking moments to wonder at the strange events of the day. The fears of evil, resulting from his own conduct, had in a great measure ceased; but, alas! they ceased only to be revived in the morning, and increased to a degree that made him still lament having forced the king's messengers, and harboured a thief. About eleven o'clock of the succeeding day, a horseman, booted and spurred, arrived in great haste at the door of the farm-house of Cairnkibbie, and requested to see the guidman.

"What's your will, sir?" said the farmer to the messenger, as he went to the door.

"I bear his Highness the King's schedule, to be delivered to William Hume, the tenant of Cairnkibbie."

"The King's schedule!" answered William, as he took the paper out of the messenger's hands—"what hae I dune to offend the king?"

"Read it," said the messenger; and William complied.

"These are to show our high will and pleasor, that whereas ane gaberlunzie, of the name of Wat Wilson, or at least ane wandering vagabond to whom that denomination does by common use or courtesie effer, did, in our guid toun of Dunse, on Wednesday last past, of this current



month of October, when our servitors and officers marching rank-on-raw, before and behint our person, reft frae the hands o' our mace-bearer, our mace of authority, fabricat of real siller, and embossed with dewysses of goold, whar-with he did flee trayterly to the protection and refuge of thee, William Hume, tenant of Cairnkibbie, wha, with thy tenants, domestics, and retainers, and others, did harbour him, even against our officers of justice, wham thou didst pummel, and lik, and abuse in a maist shameful manner, and thereafter didst confine in ane auld barn the whyle thou didst let off the said gaberlunzie, and steal ane o' the very choicest horses o' our knights; for all the whylk thou (and eke thy aiders and abettors) shalt answer at our present ambulatory Court, at our auld burgh of Dunse, wharto thou art summonit by this schedule, to attend on the day after thou receivest this, at 12 of the forenoon; whylk, if thou disregardest, thou shalt dree the punishment o' our righteous vengeance. Given at Dunse, this — day of October 15—. JAMES R."

"The Lord hae mercy on the house o' Cairnkibbie!" ejaculated the farmer, as he read this fulmination of an incensed king's wrath. "What am I to do? How can I face the king after abusing his officers, and harbouring the thief wha stole the royal mace, as weel as the horse o' his officer? Can ye no intercede for me, sir, or at least gie me some advice how I am to act in this fearfu business?"

And the farmer stamped on the ground, and paced backwards and forwards in great distress. The officer who brought the schedule seemed to sympathise with the unhappy man; but, looking over to the door of the farmhouse, and seeing Lilly standing on the landing-place, combing her fair locks, he smiled as if some hope for the unfortunate farmer had broken in on his mind.

"Is that your daughter?" said he.



“It is,” answered the farmer; “but that question has sma’ concern with this present misery that has overtaken the house o’ her father.”

“More than thou thinkest, mayhap,” answered the horseman. “Bring her with thee, man, to Court. The king cannot resist the appeal of beauty. If that fair wench will but hold up that face of hers, while thou settest forth thy defence, I’ll guarantee thy liberation for a score o’ placks. But see thou attendest; otherwise, messengers will be sent to force thy presence.”

Saying these words, the messenger clapped spurs to his horse, and was out of sight in an instant, leaving the poor farmer in a state of unabated terror. He went into the house, and reported the direful issue of last night’s adventure to his wife and daughter. The sympathetic communications of their mutual fears increased their sorrow and apprehension, till the females burst into tears, and the guidman himself groaned, at the prospect of his inevitable ruin. During the day and the night, the subject formed the continual theme of their conversation; and the terror of meeting the sovereign, the weakness of the defence, and the fear of ruinous consequences, alternated their influence over their clouded minds, without a moment’s intermission of ease. The guidwife was determined she would not leave her husband in the hands of his enemies; Lilly agreed to accompany them, at the request of her father; and Will Carr, with one or two of the farm-servants, were to go as exculpatory witnesses. The farmer had in his grief resolved upon a candid defence. The truth, he was satisfied, might bring him off, while any attempt at concealment or falsification could not fail to hasten and increase the punishment he dreaded. At an early hour next day, the party were all on their way to Dunse; the farmer dressed in his long blue coat and blue bonnet, his wife with her manky kirtle and high-crowned mutch, bedizened with large



bows of red ribbons ; and Lilly, with her "Lincolme gown" and wimple-bound hair, looking like the Queen of May herself. On their entry into the town of Dunse, they were met by two men having the appearance of officers, who claimed them in the king's name as criminals, and conducted them to a small castle at the end of the town, at that time used as a garrison for the king's troops. After passing through a long passage (their hearts palpitating with terror and awe), they came to a room of a large and stately appearance, hung round, as they could see by their side glances—for they were terrified to look up—with loose hangings of rich cloth, whereon were many curious figures, that seemed to stand out apart from that on which they were set forth. About the middle of the room—so far as they could guess by their oblique investigation—they were seated on a species of "lang settle;" and when they found themselves seated, they began (after drawing nearer and nearer to each other) to look up and around.

There was a considerable number of individuals in the hall, some standing and some sitting, and all dressed in the most gorgeous style. On an elevated seat, covered by a temporary canopy of velvet, sat the august monarch of Scotland, the Fifth James ; and at his feet were three or four individuals in the habiliments of barons. All this was little suited to calming the beating hearts of the simple individuals who were so strangely situated. There was not (and the circumstance seemed strange) an ordinary individual present. Those who acted as officers were clearly knights, or high gentlemen in the confidence of the king. All was silence for a few minutes, when a loud voice called out the name of "William Hume."

"Here," answered William, with a choking voice, while his wife and daughter shook till their very clothes rustled.

"Stand up, sir," cried the same fearful voice again.



William obeyed; and now, unimaginable awe! the voice of Majesty itself sounded through the hall.

“Read the indictment, Dempster,” said the King.

The indictment was accordingly read.

“Is it true, sir,” began his Majesty, “that thou didst harbour this man called Wat Wilson, knowing him to have stolen our mace, and thereafter didst beat and confine our messengers who were sent to apprehend him?”

Like many other timid witnesses, William Hume regained his self-possession the moment he was fairly committed to giving evidence by a plain question being put to him.

“I cam here this day,” replied William, looking up and around him with increasing confidence, “to tell your Highness God’s truth. I canna deny the charge.”

“Knowest thou the punishment of deforcing the king’s messengers?” rejoined the King.

“No, yer Highness,” replied William; “but my fears tell me it’s no sma’.”

“Hast thou anything to say in palliation of thy crime?”

“Owre muckle, I fear, yer Highness,” answered William. “I say owre muckle; for now, when I look back upon the dementit proceedings o’ that nicht, I have almost come to the conclusion that that gaberlunzie wha has brought me into a’ this trouble, was neither mair nor less than his august Majesty wha”——

“Who, who?” cried the King impatiently; while several of the lords began to laugh, and whisper, “He knows him, he knows him.”

“—Than his august Majesty,” continued William, “wha haulds his court there—there”—(pointing his finger downwards.) “To be plain, yer Highness, I do on my saul believe he was the Deevil himsel!”

The king laughed a loud laugh, and all the barons burst fair out into a hearty “guffaw;” while some of them



muttered, "A compliment—a compliment, in good faith, to the King"—a whisper which, if William Hume had heard, he might have construed into a hint that the gaberlunzie was no other than the king himself; but, luckily for the naïveté of William's testimony, he remained in his ignorance.

"What, man!" exclaimed the King, when he had again arranged his jaws into something like gravity—"Dost thou believe he was the Devil?"

"Troth do I," replied William, now getting bolder by the laughter that had rung in his ears; "and the mair I think o' him and his wild and wonderfu' feiks and freits, the mair satisfied am I o't."

William's adherence to his position produced another burst of merriment.

"What *did* he do," continued the King, "to entitle him to that character? It would ill become us to punish a subject for the acts of the Evil One."

"What did he *no* do, your Highness?" ejaculated the farmer—"he did everything the enemy could do, and man couldna. We were hauldin our Maiden when he cam to the door, and were determined no to let him in; but he turned a' oor hearts in an instant, and the enemies o' his entrance becam the freends o' his presence. Then began he to act his part: he played as nae man ever played; drank as nae man ever drank; danced, and made ithers dance, langer and blyther than ever man did on the face o' this earth; caught men's hearts like bullfinches wi' his sangs, the women's by the rub o' his beard; and sent through a' and owre a' sic a glamour and witchery o' fun, and frolic, and enjoyment—ay, and luve o' himsel—that nae mortal cratur was ever seen to hae sic power since the days o' Adam."

William drew breath, and the king and lords again laughed heartily.



“But a’ that was naething,” continued William; “I’m a plain man, as ye may see—and wha, looking at me, would say that a mortal gaberlunzie could twist me round his finger as easily as he could do a packthread? Yet this beggar did that. Your Highness’ troops cam to seize him—and wha before ever saw the guidman o’ Cairnkibbie harbour a thief? The Deevil had thrown owre me and the hail menyie the charm o’ his cantraps. We swore we would defend him—ay, even though we saw the stowen mace in his hand; we did defend him, and he had nae mair to do than to blaw in oor lugs, when clap went the barn-doors, and a’ yer Highness’ knights were imprisoned as if by magic. Could a beggar o’ ordinar flesh and blude hae dune a’ that, yer Highness?”

William again drew breath, and again the hall resounded with the laugh of the king and his lords.

“But even a’ that was little or naething,” continued William again; “for to pay us for a’ the guid we had dune him, he made himsel invisible, and rode aff like a fire-flaught on ane o’ the knight’s horses; and frae that eventfu hour to this, we hae ne’er seen his face.”

“Art satisfied, my Lord of Ross?” said the King in a whisper, to a lord that sat beside him. “Is our wager won? Have we, as we essayed, succeeded in our undertaking? Have we in the form of a beggar, so wrought upon the hearts of the members of a Maiden feast, as to gain their love to the extent of making them defend the gaberlunzie against the king’s knights, inspiring them to fight, and win the day in a fought battle, and latterly riding home on one of the enemy’s horses? Ha! ha! we opine we have—what say our judges?”

“The game is up,” replied the Lord of Ross. “I acknowledge myself beat. Your Highness has won the day.”

Another laugh sealed the triumph of the king, and



William Hume stared in amazement at the extraordinary mummary that was acted around him.

“William Hume,” said the King, “this is an artifice on thy part to escape our vengeance. I go to put on the black cap, and to return to pronounce thy fate. Thou hast admitted the crime; and to lay it on the devil’s back, is only the common way of the wicked.”

Lilly, on hearing the mention of the black cap, screamed, the mother cried for mercy, and the thunderstruck farmer waited to receive his doom. The king went out, and returned in a short time in the cap of Wat Wilson, holding in his hand the stolen mace. A new light broke in upon the mind of the criminal—he perceived at once the identity of the king and the beggar; and the fears of all were in a moment dispelled.

“Stand up, Lilly Hume and Will Carr,” said the monarch.

The voice of royalty sounded like a death-knell in the ears of the maiden. Her mind ran back to that eventful hour when she told the beggar the secret of her love; and she felt even yet the hug of the king, and the royal kiss burning on her lips. She blushed to the temples, and could scarcely stand without the support of her father, who now, when he saw how the land lay, had recovered all his fortitude, with a portion of well-founded hope that the services he performed to the beggar-king would meet with their reward.

“So your faither, Lilly, will not allow you to marry Will Carr,” resumed James, “because he is puir?”

“Guid Lord!” muttered William to himself—“hoo comes he to ken that too?—a family secret that I could scarcely breathe in my ain lug for its injustice, and now I see to be punished as it deserves.”

Lilly hung her head. She could not open her lips. The mention of her humble love by a king and in the presence



of nobles, was so far beyond the ordinary experience of her obscure life, and held such a contrast to the secret breathings of her affection in her stolen meetings with her lover among the broom knowes of Cairnkibbie, that she thought the world itself was undergoing some extraordinary convulsion. Turning round, she caught the eye of Will Carr, who, having more courage, infused some portion of his confidence into the blushing girl.

"Is that true, William Hume?" rejoined James, who despaired of getting an answer from Lilly.

"'Deed, an' it's owre true, yer Highness," answered the farmer; "but I thought there wasna a mortal on earth knew the circumstance but mysel and my wife; for, begging your Highness' pardon, I was ashamed to tell it to the lassie hersel, for fear she might hae communicated it to Will's freends, wha are decent people, and canna help their poverty."

"Dost thou still stand to thy objection to the match?" again asked James.

"If your Royal Highness, as Wat Wilson," replied the farmer, smiling, "could command me and the hail household o' Cairnkibbie to do your bidding, and turn us round your finger like a piece o' packthread, I micht hae sma chance o' resistin yer authority as king o' Scotland. I hae nae objection noo to the match, seein that a king gies oot the bans."

"William Hume," resumed the laughing monarch, "hear thy doom. For the love thou didst extend and show to our royal person, we give thee a free grant of the lands of Cairnkibbie, upon this one condition—that thou consentest to the union of Lilly Hume with Will Carr, to whom we shall, out of our royal purse, give, as a marriage portion, two hundred marks."

"I canna disobey the command o' Wat Wilson," replied William with a dry smile. "He has already exercised



great authority owre us a', and we winna throw aff our allegiance in this eventfu day."

A general laugh wound up the scene. The young couple were married, and a merry wedding they had of it; but there was one great exception to the general joy, and that was, that although there was many a good dancer present, and Tam Lutar was not absent, there was not to be seen or heard the jolly beggar who had, on the former occasion, been the soul of the Maiden. James became afterwards engaged in more serious concerns, and there were few who knew anything of his nocturnal exploit. The Humes were told to keep it a secret; and the lords who were present had too much regard for their king to expose his good-humoured eccentricities. When Hume became proprietor of Cairnkibbie, the people speculated; but little did they know, so well had the secret been kept, that the grant proceeded from the farmer's supposed misfortune, or that Wat Wilson the beggar, who danced so jovially at the Maiden, was the individual who had transformed William Hume from a simple farmer to one of the small Border lairds who held their heads so high in those days; and far less was it known that the same individual had brought about the marriage of Lilly Hume and Will Carr.

Thus have we attempted to describe one of those wild frolics in which the young King James V. of Scotland occasionally indulged. If he had lived to an advanced age, his subjects might have had as much reason to admire the king as they had to love the royal gaberlunzie, who, wherever he took up his quarters, whether "in a house in Aberdeen," or in the barn of Cairnkibbie, sent the fire of his spirit of love and fun throughout all with which he came in contact.



## THE PROFESSOR'S TALES.

## EARLY RECOLLECTIONS OF A SON OF THE HILLS.

I HAVE oftentimes thought, what, I dare say, has been thought again and again by thousands before I was born, and will be thought by as many millions after I have ceased both to think and speak—I have thought that, if any one were to give an exact transcript of his feelings and experience, in early life in particular—without any connecting link even, beyond that of time and place—such a written record could not fail to be exceedingly interesting. The novelty of the scene; the uncloyed character of the feelings; the harpy-clutching nature of the imagination; the variety of sources within and without, from which pleasure is derived and is derivable—all these form a mine of delightful insight, which has not, perhaps, ever yet been exhausted—a mine conducting to, and losing itself in, that far-away central darkness which precedes perception, recollection, existence. I remember—and it is an awful remembrance—the death of my grandmother when I was only four years old. There she lies in that bed. Alongside of that sheet, there are my mother and the minister kneeling in prayer. The whisper is conveyed to the minister's ear—"Sir, she has win to *rest*!" Oh, that sweet word *rest*!—rest negative, rest positive—rest from, rest in, rest amidst a sea of troubles—rest in an ocean of glorious happiness! "Sir, she has win to *rest*!" I can never forget the words, nor the look, nor the place, nor the all which then constituted *me*. The minister pauses in the middle of a sentence, he rises from his knees, and, taking



my mother's hand in his, as well as mine in the other, he approaches the bed of death; but, O my soul, what an impression is made upon me! My grandmother—the figure with the short cloak over her shoulders, the check apron, the tobacco-box, and the short cutty-pipe—the speaking, conversing, kind-hearted figure—what is *it now*? Asleep!—but the eyes are open, and frightfully unmeaning. Asleep!—but the mouth is somewhat awry, and there is an expression unknown, intolerable, terrible, all over the countenance.

And this is death! I cannot stand it. I fly to the door—to the brae—to the hill. I dash my face, shoulders and all, into a bracken bush, and weep, weep, weep myself asleep. When I awake, it is a dream; I am amused with the white table-cloth, the bread and cheese, and wine bottle. I am amused with the plate, salt, and earth placed on the breast of the corpse. I am amused with the coffin-ing; but, most of all—oh, delightful!—with the funeral—the well-dressed people—the numbers, the services of bun, shortbread, wine, and spirits; and above all, with various little bits and drops which fall to my share. I firmly believe I got fuddled on the occasion. Such is man; for men are but children of a larger growth. Now, there is only *one* event, circumstance, incident, firmly and fairly told—and it is interesting exceedingly: how interesting, then, would all the incidents and events of early life be, were they only narrated with equal faithfulness! So one may say; but, in so saying, they will be misled and mislead. There are few things which I remember so vividly as this. Death! I have seen thee since! Thou hast torn from me mother, brother, friend, and, above and beyond all, thou hast been betwixt these arms, murdering her whom my soul loved—the partner of my life—the mother of my babes—the balm of my soul—the glory, ornament, and boast of my existence; and yet, and yet my grandmother's



death is more vividly imprinted on brain and heart than any other event of a similar nature. Proof impressions sell dear! and proof feelings—oh, how deep are the lines, how indelible the engravings! They are cut on steel with a graving tool of adamant. The heart and the brain must be reduced to their elemental dust, ere these impressions can wear out—and yet I was only four years and six months old!

I saw it—ay, and I see it still—a poor innocent lamb. I had kissed it, and hung about its neck on the sunny brae. People said it was not thriving: I would not believe it. It was my companion. I often fed it with milk; put my finger into its little toothless mouth, and made it lap the invigorating and nourishing liquid. It had no parent, no friend, in a manner, but me, and I was only five years old, in petticoats; a very semblance of humanity; a thing to be strode over in his path by mankind of ordinary stature. But there came a blight, a curse, a dreadful change, over my dear and endearing pet. It was torn—ay, dreadfully torn, by some nightly dog. When I first found it, it was scarcely alive, lying bleeding; its white, and soft, and smooth skin dragged in the mud, torn and untouchable. There was a knife applied; but not to cure; it was to kill, to put out of pain. I could not stand it; I went into convulsions, screamed, and almost tore myself to pieces. “My lamb! my wee lambie! my dear, dear sweetie!”—but it had passed, and I was alone in my existence. But, oh! it was a fearful lesson which I had learned—a dreadful truth which I had ascertained. Youth, as well as age, is subject to death: dreadful!

There she sits in loveliness—there, there, in the midst of that hazel bush, snug in her retreat, her yellow bill projecting over the brow of her nest: smooth, black, and glittering are her feathers, and her eye is the very balmy south of expression. Yet there is a watchfulness and a timidity



in her attitude and movement—she is not at ease, for that eye has caught mine, as they protrude upon her betwixt two separated branches; and, after two or three hesitating stirs, she is out—off—away; but perched on a neighbouring bough, to mark and watch my proceedings. And *he*, too, is there; *he*, her companion and helpmate; he who was singing, or rather whistling, so loud on that tall and overtopping birch; he who was making the setting sunlight glad with his music—who was, doubtless, chanting of courtship, and love, and union, and progeny. Yes! *he* has left his branch and his sun; he has dropped down from his elevation, to inquire into the cause of that sudden chuckle, by which his lady bird has alarmed him. There are four eyes upon me now, and all my proceedings are registered in two beating bosoms. But the nest is full—it is full of life—of young life—of the gorling in its hair, and incipient tail—of yellow gaping bills, all thrust upwards, and crying, as loud as attitude and cheep can do, “Give, give, give!” Surely Solomon had never seen a blackbird’s nest with young, else he had given it a place amongst his “gives!” This was my first nest. It was discovered when I was only five years old; it was visited every day and every hour; the young ones grew apace; they feathered into blackness; they hopped from their abode; they flew, or were essaying to do so, when—O world! world! why, why, is it so with thee!—destruction came in a night, and the feathers of my young ones were strewed around their once happy and crowded abode. There had been other eyes upon them than mine. Yes! eyes to which the night is as noonday—vile, green, elongated eyes, and sharp, penetrating, and unsparing teeth, and claws, stretched, crooked, and clutching; and, in short, the cat had devoured the whole family!—not one was left to the distracted parents. I shall never, never forget their fluttering movements, their chirpings, their restlessness, their



ruffled feathers, and all but human speech. There was revenge in my young bosom—mad and terrible revenge. I snatched up the murderer—all unconscious as she was of her fault. I ran with her, like a fury, to a deep pool in the burn. I dashed her headlong into the waters—from which, of course, she readily escaped, and, eyeing me with a look of extreme surprise from the further bank, immediately vanished into the house. Though we were great friends before this event—and I would gladly have renewed our intercourse afterwards, when my passion had subsided—yet Pussy never forgave me, at least I know that she never trusted me, for I could never catch her again.

That's the pool—the very bumbling pool, where we bathed, and stood beneath the cascade, for a whole summer's day. There were more than one or two either—there were many of us; for we collected as the day advanced, and still those who were retreating, upon encountering those who were advancing, would turn with them again, and renew their immersions. It was summer—and such summer as youth (for I was only six) alone can experience—it was one long blaze of noontide radiance. The sun stationary, as in the valley of Jehosophat; the trees, green, leafy, shady, rejoicing; the very cattle dancing in upon the cooling element; and the grasshopper still dumb. The heat was intense, yet not overpowering; for we were naked—naked as were Adam and Eve prior to sin and shame—naked as is Apollo Belvidere, or the Venus de Medicis. We were Nature's children, and she was kind to us; she gave us air that was balm; sunbeams that wooed us from the pool; and water again that enticed us from the open air! What a day it was of fun and frolic, and splash, and squatter, and confusion! Now jumping from the brow into the deep; now standing beneath the Grey Mare's Tail, the flashing cascade; now laving—like Diana on Actæon—the water from the pool on each other's limbs and faces;



now circling along the green bank, in sportive chase and mimic fray, and again couching neck deep in the pool. But the awful din is on the breeze; the black south hath advanced rapidly upon meridian day; the white and swollen clouds have boiled up into spongy foam; and there runs a light blue vapour over the inky cloud beneath. Hist!—whisht!—it's *thunner!* and, ere many minutes have escaped, we are each quaking every limb at our own fire-sides.

Many recent winters have made me cry, What has become of winter? I wished Government would fit out an expedition to go in quest of him. He must have been couching somewhere, the funny old rogue, behind the Pole; he must have been coquetting with the beauties of Greenland or Nova Zembla. He has, last season, condescended to give us a glimpse of his icy beard and hoary temples. Oh, I like the old fellow dearly!—but it is the old fellow only. As to him of modern times, I know not what to make of him—a blustering, blubbering, braggadocio; making darkness his pavilion, for no other purpose than to throw pailfuls of water on the heads of women and children; letting out his colds and influenzas from his Baltic bags, and terrifying our citizens with “auld wives,” broken slates, and shivered tiles. But my winter of 1794—what a delightful companion he was! He did his work genteelly; his drift was a matter of a few hours; but they were hours of vigorous and terrible exertion. Some ten score of sheep, and some twenty shepherds, perished within a limited range, in one wild and outrageous night. It was, indeed, sublime—even to me, a youth of eight years of age, it was fearfully sublime. Can anything be more beautiful than falling and newly-fallen snow. *There* you see it above, and to a great height, shaping into varied and convolving forms. It nears, it nears, it nears, and lights in your little hand, a feathery diamond, a crystallized vapour, an evanes-



cent loveliness! But the tempest has sounded an assail, and the broadened flakes are comminuted into blinding drift—the earth beneath blows up to heaven, whilst the heaven thunders its vengeance upon the earth. The restless snow whirls, eddies, rises, disperses, accumulates. Man cannot breathe in the thick and toiling atmosphere. The wreaths swell into rounded and polished forms, and, on a sudden, disappear. The air has cleared, has stilled, and the sharp and consolidating frost has commenced. What a sea of celestial brightness! The earth wrapped in an alabaster mantle, the folds of which are the folds of beauty and enchantment. Days of glory, and nights of splendour. The moon, in her own blue heaven, contracted to a small circumference of clear, gaseous light; the hills, the hollows, the valleys, the muirs, the mosses, the woodlands, the rocky eminences, the houses, the churchyards, the gardens, the whole of external nature beneath her, giving up again into the biting and twinkling air an arrowy radiance of far-spread light. Here and there the course of a mountain torrent, or of a winding river, marked with a jagged and broken line of black. The bay of the house-dog heard far off—the sound of the curlers' sport, composed of a mixture of moanings—the “sweep,” the “guard,” the “stroke,” the homebred and hearty shout and guffaw—the Babel mixture of noises, coming softened and attuned from the distant pond. It is the “how-dum-dead” of winter. Christmas has passed, with its happiness wished and enjoyed—it is the last night of the year; long and fondly-expected Hogmanay! We are abroad, amongst the farm-houses and cottars' huts—we pass nothing that emits smoke. Our disguises are fearful, even to ourselves, as we encounter each other unexpectedly at corners. Cakes, cheese, and all manner of eatables are ours, even to profusion. And who would not endure much of life, to have such exquisite fun renewed!



But my first trout!—killed—fairly landed out of the water—dancing about in all its speckled beauty on the green bank: this was indeed an event—this was an achievement of no ordinary interest. Fishing! to thee I owe more of exquisite enjoyment than to any other amusement whatever. I am a mountain child—born, and nursed, and trotted about from my cradle on the winding banks of a bonny burn, through whose waters there looked up eyes, and there waved fins and tails. I have taken, again and again, in after life, the wings of the morning, and have made my dwelling with the stunted thorn, the corbie nest, the croaking raven, the willie-wagtail, and the plover, and the snipe, and the lapwing. I have seen mist—glorious mist!—in all its fantastic shapes, and openings and closings, from the dense crawling blanket of wet to the bright, sun-penetrated, rent, and dispersing tatterment of haze. I have studied all manner of cloud, from the swollen, puffed up, and rolling castellation, to the smooth, level, and wide-spread overshadowing. The breezes have been my companions all along. I could scan their merits and demerits with a fisher's eye, from the rough and sudden puff, urging the pool into ridges of ripple, to the steady, soft, and balmy breath that merely brought the surface into a slight commotion. Burns, too, I have studied, and streams, and gullets, and weils, and clay-brows, and bumbling pools. I have fished in the Caple with Willie Herdman. (See Blackwood, volume sixth.) I have fished in the Turrit with Stoddart. (See his admirable book on Angling.) But the true happiness of a fisher is solitude. Oh, for a fine morning in April, fresh, breezy, and dark!—a mountain glen, through which the Dar or the Brawn threads its mazy descent; the bottom clear, and purified by a recent flood; the waters not yet completely subsided—something betwixt clear and muddy—a light blue, and a still lighter brown.



Not a shepherd, nor a sheep, nor a living creature within sight—nothing but the sound of the passing stream, and the splash of the hooked and landing trout. A whole immensity of unexhausted stream unfurled before me; the day yet in its nonage; my pockets stuffed with stomach store; my mind at ease; my tongue ever and anon repeating, audibly—“Now for it, this will do, there he has it, this way, sir, this way; nay, no tricks upon travellers—out, out you *must* come—so, so, my pretty tellow, take it gently, take it gently!” But I am forgetting my first trout in the thousand and tens of thousands which have succeeded it. I had a knife—I know not how I got it; perhaps I bought it at a Thornhill fair, with a sixpence which the guidman of Auchincairn gave me as my fairing, or perhaps—but no matter; as Wordsworth would say, “I had a knife!” and this knife was my humble servant in all manner of duties; it was, in fact, my slave; it would cut bourtree, and fashion scout guns; it would make saugh whistles; it would fashion bows and arrows; it would pare cheese, and open hazel nuts; it was more generally useful than Hudibras’ sword—and I felt its value. In fact, what was I without my knife? A soldier without his gun, a fiddler without his fiddle, a tailor without his shears. And yet this very knife, dear and useful as it was to me, I parted with—I gave it away, I fairly bartered it for a bait-hook with a horse-hair line attached to it. But then I had seen, and seen it for the first time, a trout caught with this very hook and line. Having a hook and line, I cut myself, from an adjoining wood, a rowan-tree fishing-rod, which might serve a double purpose, protecting me from the witches, and aiding me in catching trout. Away I went, “owre muirs and mosses mony o’,” to the glorious Caple, of which I had heard much. I baited my hook with some difficulty; for worms, whatever boys may be, are not fond of *the sport*. I stood alongside of the deep



black pool. I saw the deception alight in the water, and heard the plump; it sank, and sank, by a certain law, which philosophers have named gravitation; it became first pale-white, then yellow, then almost red, as it sank away into the dark profundity of mossy water. It lay still and motionless for a few instants. At last it moved; ye powers! it cuts the water like an edged instrument—it pulls—pulls strongly. The top of the rod touches the surface of the pool—something must be done—I am all trepidation. But, by mere strength of pulling and of tackle, a large yellow-wamed, black-backed fellow lies panting on the sand bank at the foot of the pool.

“ And its hame, hame, hame,  
Fain wad I be;  
And it's hame, hame, hame,  
To my ain mammie!”

I ran home with all possible rapidity; and displayed, on a very large pewter plate, my first trout, to my kind and affectionate parent. My happiness was completed.

The woods!—I was born in the woods; man lives originally in the primeval forests, with the exception, perhaps, of the Arab, the Babylonian, and Egyptian; wherever there was sufficient soil and suitable climate, there was wood, from Lapland to Capetown, from the Bay of Biscay to the Yellow Sea. The American forests still exist, where even the axe of European civilization has not reached them. There woods are natural to man; he turns to them as to something, he cannot well tell how or why, congenial to his nature. At least so I have felt it, and feel it still in my recollections of early life. Plantations are stiff and artificial, generally consisting of a dense field of regular similarity; but natural wood, the offspring of our own soil, the indigenous plants of Scotland—the birch, for example, with its bending and elegant twigs, its white stem, and grateful fragrance; the eternal oak, with its



leafy shade; the tough ash, with its pointed leaf; the lowly hazel, with its straight stems and fragrant nuts; the saugh, the willow, the thorn-sloe, the haw, the elder, the bourtree, the crabtree, the briar, and the bramble—all these consociate lovingly, and actually did consociate around, and almost over, the humble but snug cot where I first drew breath. There, my first herald of day was the song of the linnet, thrush, or blackbird; there, my first efforts were made in gaining the top of some little ash or birch; there, my first riches consisted in a few pints of ripened and browned nuts, kept in the leg of a footless stocking, against the ensuing Halloween. But Halloween has now become a mere name—*et preterea nihil*, still *stat nominis umbra*, sufficient to make me recollect with delight the exquisite pleasure which I enjoyed in anticipating as well as in observing this festival. The crabtree yielded its reddest and ripest fruit for the occasion; a casual apple was hooked over the hedge of the castle orchard for the same purpose; but, above and beyond all, nuts were gathered, dried and stored away into sly corners and out-of-the-way places. What amusement so delightful as nut-gathering! There they hang to the afternoon sun, brown and ready to escape from their husks or shells. There are twosome clusters, and threesome clusters; and if you could reach without shaking that topmost branch (but there is the difficulty and the danger), you may even secure a twelvesome cluster—a glorious knot of lovely associates, that would crumble from their abodes into your hands like dried leaves! You pass on from bush to bush; but you have been anticipated. Will or Tam, or Jock or Jamie, or all four, have been there before you, and have left you nothing but a scanty gleanings. Here and there, you are enabled to extract from the centre of a leafy shade, an ill-ripened, because an unsound, single nut, which serves no better purpose than to break



your jaws with its emptiness, in cracking it. But you push away into the interior—the *terra incognita* of the woodland; and, standing out by itself, aired and sunned all over, you find a little branch of scroggs, stunted and ill-leaved, but really covered all over with the most exquisite fruitage. Long, large, are the nuts you have thus acquired; and you chuckle inwardly, as you contemplate a prize which has been reserved for your exclusive use. With what despatch are cluster after cluster accumulated into handfuls, and then again into pocketfuls, and then, at last, into cap, hat, or bonnetfuls, till you become a kind of shellicoat, a walking *nuttery*, a thing of husks and kernels! The voice of your companions is loud and frequent, in the language of inquiry into the state of your success; but you preserve a deep silence, or answer prevaricatingly, by, “you have got a few—not many—very bad place this,” &c. &c. At last you come upon them with the astonishment of display, and expose your treasure with ineffable feelings of triumph. You have distanced them all. Your Halloween fortune is made—you are a happy being.

But Halloween comes at last—Scotland’s Halloween—Burns’ Halloween—the Halloween of centuries upon centuries—of the Celt amidst his mountains, the Saxon in his valley, the Druid in his woods, King James the First in his palace—and old Janet Smith in her humble cottage. It was at Janet Smith’s that I held the first Halloween of which I have any distinct recollection. There was a kind of couthiness about old Janet, which made her hearth the resort of all the young lads and lasses, boys and girls, around. On Halloween, Janet had on her best head-gear, her check apron, and clean neck napkin.

We had such burning of nuts, such pu’ing of stocks, such singing of songs, such gibing, laughing, cracking, tale-telling, and, to crown all, such a gallant bowl of punch,



made from a sonsy greybeard, which the young men had taken care to store previously with the needful, that I went home half crazy, and, my mother affirmed, continued so for several days to come.

Ye gods ! what superstitious notions peopled my brain ever since ! I recollect such fears about the invisible world becoming visible—I walked amidst a multitude of unseen terrors, ever ready to burst the casement of immateriality, and to stand, naked, confessed, in material semblance, before me. There was the fairy, the inhabitant of the green unploughed knowe, the green-coated imp, intent on child-stealing, or rather barter, and jingling her bridle through the high air on Halloween ; there was the ghost, awful, solemn, and admonishing, pointing with the finger to buried treasure or murder glen ; there was the wraith, little less terrible, and clothed in a well-known presence, prognosticating death or sore affliction ; there was the death-watch, distinctly heard tick, ticking, all night long, in the bed-post ; there were the blue lights seen in round spots on the bed-head, on the very night when three lads and three lasses perished in the boat ; there was the muckle deil himself, driving in a post-chaise, over the “chaise-craig,” or panting, like a bull-dog, at the nightly traveller’s feet ; and, over and above all these, was “Will o’ the Wisp,” skipping about from one side of the moss to the other, and always placing itself betwixt you and your home.

“D’ye see that ?” said my cousin, Nelly Laurie, a girl of eighteen, to me, when my years could be reckoned by the number of the muses.

“What ! what is it !” I exclaimed ; and my attention was directed towards a moss, or morass, through which our footpath lay, on our way home, about ten o’clock of a dark, damp, and cloudy night.

“There ! there it’s again !”

There is something in the word “it” most indefinitely



terrific. Had she said *he* or *she*, or even that ghost, or that wraith, or that bogle, it would not have been half so startling; but “it”—do you see it?—see a thing without a name, a definition—a mere object, shorn of its accidents or qualities! This is indeed most awful. With fear and trembling, I lifted up mine eyes, and beheld—O mercy, mercy!—a light in the middle of the moss, where no light should have been; and it was floating and playing about, blue as indigo, and making the darkness around it visible. My joints relaxed, and I fell to the earth, incapable of motion. I was a mere bundle of loose and unconnected bones, sinews, and muscles. My cousin stood over me, incapable of deciding what would be done; at last, it was discovered that to advance homewards was better than to retrograde, as we were already more than half-way on our course. I was instructed to repeat, and to continue repeating, aloud, the Lord’s prayer; whilst she, on whose shoulders I lay like a dead sheep, continued to give audible note to the tune of the twenty-third psalm. It was, indeed, an odd concert for the devil, or his emissary, Mr. William yclept “of the Wisp,” to listen to; for, whilst I was roaring out, in perfect desperation, “Our Father which art in Heaven,” she was articulating, in a clear and overpowering tone, “The Lord’s my shepherd;” whilst I slipt into “Hallowed be thy name,” she advanced with, “I’ll not want—he makes me down to lie!”—and, sure enough, down *both of us lay*, with a vengeance, in the midst of a moss-hole, into which, from terror and the darkness of the night, we had inadvertently plunged. “What’s the meaning of all this, sirs!” exclaimed a well-known voice. It was my mother’s, God bless her! I clung to her like grim death, and never quitted my hold till I was snugly lodged above the fire, near to the lamp, and with dog, cat, my cousin, and my mother, betwixt me and the dark door-way passage! I did not get a sound sleep for months and years



afterwards! Such are thy miseries, unhallowed, unmanly superstition! Disease may relax the body and enervate the whole frame; but thou art the disease of the soul, the fever of the brain. Misfortunes may be borne—pain must be endured till it is cured—but superstition such as *this*, is neither endurable nor curable. I am not yet completely cured of it, now that I have entered my sixtieth year. Were you to send me into an empty, dark church, at midnight, and through a surrounding churchyard, peopled with the bodies of the dead, I durst not go, though you gave me large sums of money. And is my judgment or reason in fault? Not at all; it is my feelings, my moral nature; my very blood has got such a blue tinge that I verily believe it would look like the blue ink I am writing with, were it caught in a tea-cup! Sir Walter Scott was bit, too, and so are nine-tenths of the *living*, though they won't allow it. It has now become, like latent heat, an unseen agency; but it still acts, and powerfully, on civilized, and even learned man!

Seeking of birds' nests is a glorious amusement, and the knowledge of a large amount of these is a possession to be boasted of. I know of a linnet's nest, says one—and I of a robin's, says another—I of shilfa's, says a third; but a fourth party comes in with his mavis, and all competition is at an end. The mavis is indeed a Scottish nightingale; he sings so mellow, and so varied—his brown speckled breast turned up to the rising or the setting sun, he pours o'er the woodland a whole concert of harmony; and then he awakens into competition the blackbird, with his *Æolian* whistle; the green and grey linnet, with their sharp and sweet tweedle-twee; the goldfinch, with his scarlet hood and song of flame; and the lark on the far-off fell, with his minstrelsy of heaven's border. But what to a boy, a boy of eight or nine, is all this song and sunshine, in comparison with the fact—"I know of five birds' nests!"



Why, this annunciation is enough to settle your doom—you may almost apprehend assassination, so much must you be envied. But true it is, and of verity; I once knew five birds' nests—all containing eggs or young. Oh, I remember them as it were only of yesterday. Time has only engraved, with a tool of adamant, the impression deeper and deeper. There was the snug and pendulous abode of the little kitty-wren. It was beneath the brow of the burn, covered over from winds and rains by the incumbent bank and brushwood. It was a plum-pudding, with a hole made by your thumb on one side; a stationary football, composed of all things soft and comfortable, covered on the outside with fog or moss, and in the inside lined with the down of feathers; and there were from sixteen to twenty little blue *peas* in it; and the little hen sat on them daily, and opposed her little bill vigorously to my intrusive finger. She was not afraid—not she! she fought manfully, "*pro aris et focis*;" if not, as the Romans say, "*manibus pedibusque*;" nor, as the savage Saxons say, "tooth and nail," nor, as the shepherd of Ettrick says, "knees and elbows an' a',"—still she fought with the instruments with which nature had endowed her, with her bill and her little claws, and she fought it most vigorously. O Nature! thou art a fearful mystery of wisdom—thou makest the meekest and most timid natures bold as lions when their progeny are concerned. Look at the hen—poor chucky, that scrapes her pittance from the doorway or dunghill, whom the veriest whelp which can bark and tumble over will scare into wing and screech—put the hen on eggs, give her an infant brood, show her danger from dog, man, bear, or lion—who's afraid? Not she at least; she will dance on the nose of the mastiff, she will fly in the face of humanity, whether in the shape of man, woman, boy, or child. The warrior looks fierce in his regimentals and armour; but what cares she for guns, bayonets, swords, and pistols? Not a peppercorn!



Her young ones are behind her, and she will meet the armed monster, with foot, bill, wing, and with a fearful intonation of terrifying sounds. No Highland regiment, even at Prestonpans, ever set up a more alarming battle shout. She is never conquered—like Achilles, she is “invincible;” but so soon as her progeny need no more her care or her protection—so soon as they have been pecked into estrangement, and sent to scrape and provide for themselves—she resumes all her mild and feminine qualities—she is plain “chucky” again! The linnet’s nest is covered with scales of a silky whiteness—the fine thin *laminæ* which cover the bark of the oak, of that very tree in the cleft of whose branches her nursery is fixed. Inside of this little nicely-proportioned cup, there are five beautifully-spotted eggs—a white ground with a grey spot, flung over the whole shell with a most charming regularity. And there is a nest in that stone wall which surrounds the plantation—it is that of the stone-chatter—filthy, unsonsy bird, fit companion for the yellow yeldring, which conceals her treasure ’neath a tuft of grass on the bent, and is trodden under foot. They are both deserving of all detestation; the one for drinking every May morning of the devil’s-blood, and the other for many an impertinent jest and chatter. Let them perish in one day—let their eggs be blown, and hung up as ornaments in strings along the brow of the household looking-glass, or smashed to atoms by the stroke of an urchin previously blinded.

“For he ne’er would be true, she averred,  
That would rob a poor bird.”

It was whilst engaged in robbery of this kind, that I was first checked by the tears and entreaties of Mary—of my dear cousin, Mary Morison. Alas! poor Mary! thou wast mild, beautiful, kind, merciful; yet thy days have been numbered, and thou art gone—

“Unde negant redire quenquam;”



and I, a lubber fiend in comparison with thy beauty and gentleness—I, a personification of cruelty and horror in comparison with thee—I am still alive, and thinking of thee—whilst thou art not even *dust*—“*etiam periere ruinæ.*” Forty-five years confound even dust, and reduce to a fearful nonentity all that smiled, and charmed, and inspired. But of this enough—this way madness lies.

That was a terrible conflagration at Miramichi. I think I hear it crashing, thundering, crackling on; before it the wild beasts, the serpents, the cattle—man! poor, houseless, helpless, smoke-enveloped, and perishing man. The reason why I can conceive so vividly of this awful and comparatively recent visitation is this—I was accustomed to “set muirburn” when a boy of nine or ten. The primeval heath of our mountains was strong, bushy; and, when dry in spring, exceedingly inflammable. I was a mountain child; for, on one side of my dwelling the heather withered and bloomed up to the door; and when one thinks of the “bonny blooming heather,” it is quite refreshing; it blooms when all things around it are withering, during the later months of harvest; but then, oh, then, it puts on such a russet robe of beauty—a dark evening cloud tipped and tinged with red—a mantle of black velvet spangled with gold; and its fragrance is honey steeped in myrrh. Yet when withered in March and April, it is an object of aversion to the sheep farmer, who prefers green grass and tender sward; and he issues to impatient boyhood the sentence of destruction. Peat follows peat, kindled at one end, and held by the other; the hillside or the level muir swarm with matches; carefully is the ignition communicated to the dry and widespread heath; from spot to spot—in lines and in circles—it extends and unites—the wind is up, and one continuous blaze is the almost immediate consequence. It is night, dark night—the clouds above catch and reflect the uncertain gleam. The heath-



fowl wing their terrified flight—through, above, and beneath the rolling and outspreading smoke. The flame gathers into a point; and, at the more advanced part of the curvature, the force and blaze is terrible. A thousand tongues of fire shoot up into the density, and immediately disappear. Who now so venturous as to dash headlong through the hottest flame, and to recover from beneath the choking night his former position? There goes—a hat—a cap—a bonnet! They have taken up their position in the pathway of the devouring flood of fire—and who so brave, so daring, as to extricate his own property from instant destruction? Hurrah! hurrah! from a score of throats, mixes with the thunder, the crackle, the roll—all is power, novelty, ecstasy; bare heads and bare feet dance and show conspicuously upon the still smoking turf. Here an adder is seen writhing and twisting in the agonies of death. There a half-burned hat evinces the fun and the folly of its owner. But, oh, horrible! what is that on the edge of vision, in the dim and hazy distance; it comes forward, bounding, turning, and bellowing, fearful and paralysing; it is the bull himself escaped from his fold, and maddened by the smoke and blazing atmosphere. He comes down upon the charge, tail erect, and head down, tossing all that is solid under his feet, and looking through the scattered earth with eyes glaring as well as reflecting fire. Achilles, Hector, Agamemnon, Wallace, Wellington, never entered a field of battle with such a terrific presence. He seems as if he had just escaped from a Roman or Spanish arena. He is desperately infuriated; and woe be to him who shall be overtaken by this muscular tornado in his weakness and his fears! We are off! *diffugimus!* We are nowhere to be found. One has made for a distant wall surrounding the heather park, and is in the act of climbing it. The bull is in full chase, armed with two short but powerful horns. The fugitive



has just laid hold of an upper stone to assist his ascent; but the faithless help has given way; stone and he are lying alongside of the dyke. The bull is in full scent. The noise has directed him. He nears—he nears—he nears! My God! the urchin's life is not worth two minutes' purchase.

“Now, do thy speedy, Arnot Wull—

'Twill take it all to clear the bull!”

Bravo! the summit is gained; the feet of the pursued are seen flying in mid air; he has sprung from the summit at least twenty feet; but the whole weight of the pursuing brute is upon the crazy structure; it gives way with a crash, and down rush stones over stones, and the poor maimed, bruised brute over all. What! Mr. Bull! are you satisfied?—why not continue the sport? But the game is up; Will has regained his mother's dwelling, and now lives to record this wonderful, this all but miraculous escape. Catch me setting muirburn again!

I was very unwilling, at the age of nine, to be sent to school—I had formed for myself a home society with which I was perfectly satisfied; but the decree had gone forth, and to school I must go, to learn Latin, conducted by a scholar of some standing. I had three miles to walk, but I would have wished them ten. Shakspeare shows the characters with whom time gallops, and, amongst others, with a thief who is to be hanged on a certain day—he might have mentioned a schoolboy, with shiny morning face, going unwillingly to school. When I came within sight of the large, many-windowed building, my heart beat sorely with alarm. All was new to me—the boys, the masters, the house, the grounds around it; in fact, I was about to pass into a new state of being. I was bursting the shell, and coming forth into real life. Hitherto I had seen nobody but the herd-callan, the Gibson family, my mother and *her* aunts. I was exceeding smart and mischievous, no doubt;



but my sphere of operations was confined; now it was about to be enlarged—I must face three hundred boys and girls in the park or school play-ground of Wallacehall. All eyes would be turned upon me; my very dress would undergo a scrutiny; nor would I easily escape the seasoning welcome, a hearty drubbing: all this I anticipated, and all this and more I soon experienced. When I set up my face in the play-ground about half-past eight (nine being the school hour), all was commotion. Alas! how many are now motionless who were then active—*still*, who were then vociferous—*cold*, whose hearts were then beating warm and buoyant! When the disk of my countenance appeared at the entrance into the park or play-ground, I was immediately smoked. One fellow came up with the most affected good-nature, and hoped my *mither* was with me. I would be in great danger, he said, without her. A second one bid me tie my shoe, and, whilst I was stooping, hauled me heels over head. I had not fairly recovered my natural position, when I was hit on the side of my head with a ball, till my eyes glanced fire; anon, the drive, the crowd, the scramble carried me along with it completely off my feet. I was pelted, bruised, buffeted, and even kicked. Human nature could stand it no longer—my spirit, even that of the Devil, was awakened within me—I struck out around me with all my might, and at random—somebody's nose happened to come in the way of my knuckles, and it bled; he struck back again, and the blood sprang from my lips. A ring was formed—to it we went—I, running in upon him head and shoulders, “knees and elbows an’ a’,” laid him flat; unfair play was proclaimed—my antagonist was raised; but he was pale and breathless; he said he was *hearted*, and had almost fainted; so I got a cheap victory, and eternal glory! I took my place amongst the boys, unmolested and respected in future. I would twaddle through a pretty decent volume, about public and private



education, and everybody but my bookseller would think I was speaking sense ; but I will spare my reader and myself, and only add, in one sentence, that a public seminary, well conducted, is the best of all schools *for the world*—preparation for the buffetings, kickings, and jostlings of life.

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## THE SUICIDE'S GRAVE.

THE suicide's grave—where is it ? It is at the meeting or crossing of three public roads ; the body has been thrust down, under the darkness of night, into a coffinless grave. The breast, formerly torn and lacerated by passions, has lately been mangled into horrid deformity by the pointed stake ; and the traveller, as he walks, rides, or drives along, regards the spot with an eye of suspicion, and blesses his stars that he is a living man. The suicide's grave—where is it ? On the bare and cold top of that mountain which divides Lanark from Dumfriesshire. There you may see congregated the hooded crow, and the grey gled, and the eagle—but they are not congregated in peace and in friendship ; they are fearful rivals, and terrible notes do they utter as they contend over the body of her who was fair, and innocent, and happy. Alas, for Alice Lorimer ! Her story is a sad one, and it would require the pen of a Sterne or a Wilson to do it justice. But the circumstances are of themselves so full of mournful interest, that, even though stated in the most simple language, they cannot fail, I should think, to interest—nay, I will say it at once, to excite sympathy and pity ; for why should we not pity the unhappy and unfortunate ? They are pitied in poverty, in obscurity, in sickness, in death. Why should not we even pity the guilty and abandoned ? They are pitied in prison, on the day of trial, and, most of all, in the hour of



execution. There—even there—on that platform, the murderer himself obtains that sympathy which we refuse to the suicide. He who has only ruined, destroyed himself, is held in greater abhorrence than the man who has ruined innocence, and even murdered the unhappy mother and unborn babe. Away with such unjust and ungenerous distinctions! Away, and to the highway and to the mountain top, and to the raven, and the falcon, and the eagle, with the seducer and the murderer; and let the poor suicide's grave, in future, be in consecrated ground, where remembrance may soon overlook his woes and his very existence. Let him sleep unknowing and unknown in the churchyard of his fathers. Alice Lorimer, I myself knew—I was intimately acquainted with her—I was a companion and a favourite. In frosty weather we have frequented the same slides, and, when Alice was in danger of falling, I have caught her in my arms; we have hopped together for hours, playing at beds, and I even made Alice privy to all my birds' nests. Hers was indeed a playful, but a gentle nature. Her heart was light, her voice clear and cheerful, and her whole affections were engrossed by an only surviving parent, a widowed father. Alice was his first-born and his last. Her mother had given her life at the expense of her own; and her father, a shoemaker in the village of Croalchapel, devoted his whole spare time to the education of Alice. Often have I seen him, with the shoe on the last, and the elshun in his hand, pursuing his daily labours; but listening attentively all the while to Aly's readings. It was thus the child was taught to read the Bible, to say her prayers, and ultimately to make her father's dinner and her own. Their cottage stood at what was termed the "*head* of the town," on a sunny eminence looking to the west; behind it were the shade and the shelter of many trees, of the widespread oak, the tall ash, and the sweetly-scented birch. On Sabbath afternoons.



John Lorimer might be seen with his beloved child, clean and neatly dressed, ascending to the top of the Bormoors braes; and, from the green summit of the eminence, looking abroad over a landscape, certainly not surpassed by any which has yet come under the writer's observation. On his one hand lay the worn and silver-clasped Bible, from which portions of the gospels were occasionally read, and on the other reposed Poodle, a little wire-haired dog of uncommon natural parts, which had been greatly improved by education. Poodle could bark, and do all manner of things. His eyes would "glisten in friendship, or beam in reply." His nose was a platform, from which many little pieces of bread had been tossed up into the air, and afterwards snapped. He was all obedience to little Alice in particular; and, at her bidding, would do anything but swim—he had, somehow or other, contracted an aversion for the water, probably referable to some mischievous boys having one day thrown him into Closeburn Loch.

Alice and I went to school together. Her father's cottage lay directly in my way, and I called daily for the sweet girl. The other boys laughed at me, and made a fool of me, and asked me if I had seen Alice this morning. I could not stand this; for I revered the little innocent lamb—so I hit the Mr. Impertinence a blow in the stomach, which sent him reeling over several benches. I was no more taunted about Alice Lorimer. There were a number of older and less feminine girls at the school at this time. At play-hours these congregated by themselves behind the school, whilst the boys occupied the play-ground in front. Alice was one day severely handled by a neighbour's daughter, who had fixed a quarrel on her, and then beat her severely, calling her all manner of names, and, amongst others, honouring her with my own. I found the poor child—for I was a few years older—in tears, as we met in the Castle-wood on our way home. It was with difficulty



that I drew, bit by bit, the whole truth from her; and I resolved to punish, in one way or other, the rude and ill-hearted aggressor in this matter. I could not think of punishing her myself; but I got Jean Watson, the servant-maid of the factor's clerk—a kind of haverel, who sometimes threw me an apple over the hedge in passing—I got her to catch the culprit after dark, and to chastise her in her own way. I know not how it was effected, but it produced loud screams, and much merriment to me; for I was lying all the while *perdu* on the other side of the hedge. Tibby Murdoch was a most revengeful person—quite the antipodes to sweet Alice Lorimer. She was the daughter of a quarryman, who had come, only a few years before, to reside in the place, and work at the Laird of Closeburn's lime-works. How difficult it is for poor blind mortals to see the consequences of their actions! Had I then fully perceived what this act of retaliation was to lead to—what dismal consequences were to follow—I would rather have sunk at once into perdition than have been concerned in the affair. Tibby Murdoch's father was a brutal and a passionate man; and, understanding from his daughter how matters stood, and that poor Alice Lorimer had been the cause of his daughter's disaster, he left his work at mid-day, and, taking a horse-whip in his hand, entered the shoemaker's shop, and not finding Alice, without more ado, he proceeded to apply it to John Lorimer's shoulders. John Lorimer was a little, but a strong and well-made man, and, though the other was tall, bull-headed, and extremely athletic, John immediately threw aside his instruments of labour, which he felt it was dangerous to use on the occasion, and closed at once with the enemy. The struggle was severe; but John Lorimer, having got a hold of Murdoch about the middle, fairly lifted him off his feet, and dashed him down on the floor. Murdoch's strength, however, was superior to John's; and he contrived to roll over



upon his enemy, and at last to thrust his head immediately under a grate, which stood in a corner of the shop, containing live coals for melting some rosin which was about to be used. The crucible, with the melted and boiling rosin was upturned; and, unfortunately, the whole contents were spread over John Lorimer's face. He was dreadfully burned; but, what was worst of all, he lost the sight of one eye by the accident, and was very materially injured in the other. On an investigation by the proper authorities, Murdoch was convicted of the assault, and imprisoned for twelve calendar months. During his imprisonment, revenge upon poor Lorimer was his constant theme; and, when the time expired, he removed to the parish of Keir, and found employment in a lime-work belonging to Dr. Hunter of Barjarg. He was still, unfortunately, within an hour's walk of Croalchapel, and lay, like a cat in a corner, watching his prey. In the meantime, John Lorimer, though greatly deformed in his countenance, recovered the use of one eye, and pursued his quiet and useful labour as formerly. As his daughter Alice advanced in years, she grew in loveliness and virtue. At twelve years of age she became her father's housekeeper; and conducted herself in that capacity with surprising sense and prudence. It was at this time that I left school for college; and I spent the last night with Alice Lorimer. I was then a lad of sixteen, and she, as I have said, was twelve. What had I to do in the Castle-wood, by moonlight, and late after her father had gone to rest, with Alice Lorimer! Gentle reader, have a little patience, and exercise a little Christian charity, and, upon my honour, I will tell you all! But, in the first place, I must know your sex, and whether or not you have ever been sixteen years old. If your sex corresponds with my own, and your information on the other subject is equal to my own, then you will understand the thing completely. I was then as innocent as it is possible



for a youth of sixteen to be ; nay, I was absolutely shy and bashful to a great degree, and would have shrunk from any advances, even to innocent familiarity, with the other sex. But I was not in love with Alice Lorimer. True, she preferred my company to that of any other person, save her dearly-beloved father ; true, she sat on my knee, as she did on that of her parent, unconscious of any different feeling in the two positions ; but we never talked of love ; I would as soon have thought of talking of our being king and queen ; and as to Alice, her friendship for me was as pure as the love of angels. She could not think of parting with me—of perhaps (and she burst into tears) never seeing me again. I must write to her—and I must come back and see her, and talk funnily to her father, who liked a joke—and I must—I forget how many “musts” there were ; but they lasted till half-past one o’clock. I parted with her at her father’s door. I never saw her again !

I was coming down Enterkin late in a fine moonlight night in the spring of 1806. I was on my way to join a family in Galloway, where I long acted in the capacity of tutor. I had then attained my twenty-first year ; and I chanced to be calculating—as I expected seeing Alice Lorimer on the following day—what her age must be. Let me see, said I, so audibly that I started at my own utterance, as did a little pony I rode ; and what followed was the sum of my reflections. I calculated, by the common rule of proportion, that if Alice was twelve when I was sixteen, she would be seventeen now that I was twenty-one. Seventeen ! I repeated, just seventeen !—and I urged on the pony instinctively, as if hastening towards Croalchapel. But I had been five years at Edinburgh at College. What a change had come over the spirit of my dreams during that period ! I had had to contend with fortune in many ways ; had been often disappointed, and sometimes driven almost to despair ; again I had prospered, got into lucrative employ-



ment, become a member of speaking societies, distinguished myself by talking sense and nonsense right and left. I had spent many merry evenings in Johnie Dowie's; and had seen Lady Charlotte Campbell and Tom Sheridan in a box at the theatre. In fact, I was not now the same being I was when I left for College; and I felt that, however fair and faultless Alice Lorimer might be, she could never be mine—I could never be hers; our fortunes were separated by a barrier which, when I went to College, I did not clearly perceive. In fact, my ambition now taught me to aim at the bar or the church; and I knew that, for years to come, I must be contented with a single life, which, in Edinburgh in particular, I had learned to endure without murmuring. Yet I thought of poor Alice with most kindly feelings, and had some secret doubts upon the propriety of exposing myself in her presence to a revival of old times and former feelings. In this tone of mind I was jogging on, with half a bottle of Mrs. Otto's (of Leadhills) best port wine under my belt, and endeavouring to collect some rhymes to the word Lorimer; but either the muse was unpropitious, or the word, like that mentioned in Horace, refused to stand in verse; it so happened that I had given up the effort, and was about to dismiss the subject altogether, when I discovered, near the bottom of the pass, a number of figures advancing upon me in an opposite direction. As they came up the pass, under a meridian moon, I could discover that they carried something on a barrow, which, on nearer inspection, I found to be a coffin. I drew my pony to the side of the road, lifted my hat reverentially, and the party, consisting of upwards of twenty, passed in solemn silence. The incident was a little startling, and somewhat unnatural, not to say superhuman; for, why were these people carrying a coffin up the long and narrow pass which separates Lanark from Dumfriesshire, so late at night, and in such mysterious



silence? A thought struck me, which contributed not a little to ease my mind in regard to supernaturals; were they a company of smugglers from Bowness, taking this method of carrying forward their untaxed goods to Lanark and Glasgow? Ruminating on this subject, and laughing inwardly at my own ingenuity and discernment, I arrived at last at Thornhill, where I remained for the night. Next morning I reached Croalchapel, on my way to my birth-place. I went up to that very door at which I had parted with Alice, some five years before, and endeavoured to open it; but it was shut and locked. I looked in at the end-window, above the fire-place; but there was neither fire nor inhabitant—all was silence. My heart sank within me; and a neighbour, who saw my ignorance and mistake, advertised me that both parent and child were no more; and that Alice Lorimer was *buried*!—here he hesitated, and seemed to retract the expression—“at least,” said he, “committed to the earth last night!”

“Was she not buried by her father in the burial-ground of the Lorimers of Closeburn?” said I, hastily, and in an agitated tone. The man looked me in the face attentively, and, probably then for the first time recognising me, waved his hand, burst into tears, and left me. I hastened to the home of my fathers, half distracted. My mother still lived and enjoyed good health—from her I learned the following particulars.

John Lorimer’s sight, she said, served him for a time, during which he wrought as usual, and his daughter grew to be a tall and handsome woman; but at last it began to fail, and he would put the elshun into a wrong place, or thrust it into his hand. Alice perceived this, and was most anxious to provide for her father under this irremediable calamity. She took in linen and bleached it on the bonny knowe among the gowans; she span yarn, and sold it at Thornhill fairs; in short, she did all she could to support



herself and her father in an honest and honourable way. But it was a severe struggle to make ends meet. In the meantime she had several offers of marriage; but refused them all, as she could not think of leaving her poor blind parent alone and helpless, and none of her lovers were rich enough to present a home to a supernumerary inmate. One evening, whilst, after a severe day's labour, she was sitting with old Poodle (her constant companion, but now likewise blind) by the fire, Mr. John Murdoch made his appearance. Her father had gone early to bed in the shop end of the house, and did not know of the man's visit. He came, he said, as a repentant sinner to relieve her necessities. He had occasioned her father's blindness, and he was glad to be made the instrument of bringing some pecuniary relief. Thus saying, he put into her hands a five-pound note, and, without waiting for a reply, took his departure. This startled poor Alice not a little; she looked at the money, then thought of the man, and again listened to see if her father was sleeping—at last, she put it into her chest, determined not to make use of it unless in case of necessity. The factor, who had hitherto been lenient, became urgent for the rent. There were two years due, and the five-pound note exactly covered the debt; away therefore it went into the factor's hands, and poor Alice returned thanks on her knees to Heaven, that had sent her the means of keeping from her father the knowledge of their situation.

In a few days Murdoch found her at the washing-green, and entered more particularly into the history of the money. He said it had been sent by one who had seen and admired her. He was on a visit at Barjarg, the proprietor being his uncle. He was the son and heir of a very rich man, not expected to live many months. He was determined to please himself in marrying, having observed great misery arise from adopting a contrary plan;



and he wished, in fine, to cultivate a further acquaintance with Alice, to whom he had sent another five-pound note in the meantime. In short, after exhibiting great reluctance to agree to a secret interview, and after having again and again tried to get words to communicate the whole matter to her father, a young gentleman of gaudy and genteel appearance made his way out of the adjoining wood, and was introduced by Murdoch as young Johnstone of Westerhall. Few words passed—poor Alice was quite non-plussed—she felt that she was not equal to this awful trial, and yet there was something fearfully pleasant in it. A young man, handsome and rich—her father blind and helpless—her hand quite at her own disposal—and independence and comfort brought to the good man's house for life. Her lover, however, did not press the thing further that time; he took his departure along with Murdoch, and Alice was a second time left to her own reflections. These, however, soon informed her that she was on the brink of perdition. She ran at once to her father, and, in a paroxysm of feeling, informed him of all that had passed. He reproved her, but gently, for her having devoted the money to the purpose which she mentioned; informed her that he was richer than she supposed, for he had just five pounds which her sainted mother had put into his hand on the marriage day; and that he was keeping, and had kept it sacred against the expenses of his funeral. He would now willingly give it to recover their house, and to free her from all temptation to sin. Alice wept; but she felt comforted in the assurance that, by repaying the money, and breaking off all connection with Murdoch and Johnstone, she was doing the right and the safe thing. Accordingly, she went to bed with a satisfied mind, determined next day to find out Murdoch's dwelling, and have everything settled to her father's advice and her own wish. She dressed herself in her best; and set out, soon after breakfast, for Barjarg



Castle, never to see her father again. She was betrayed by the revengeful Murdoch to a dissipated, a heartless debauchee; was carried by force betwixt Murdoch and him in a chaise to Dumfries; was lodged by Johnstone in convenient quarters. Every art was used to reconcile her to her situation: but all in vain; she stood her trials nobly; detected the old game of a private marriage; and afterwards refused to be united to Johnstone on any terms whatever. But in the meantime, poor John Lorimer missed his daughter, and immediately guessed the cause of it. Tibby Murdoch took care to inform him, for his comfort, that Alice had run away with the young Laird of Westerha', and, giggling and laughing all the while, that they were living very comfortably and lovingly in Dumfries. The blind man knew this to be all a lie, but he knew enough to kill him; he knew that his daughter was young and beautiful—that a villain had been endeavouring to inveigle her—that a still greater villain, Murdoch, had betrayed her—and that, in a word, she was now a poor dishonoured woman. He knew, or thought he knew, all this, and was found dead next morning in his bed. The doctors said he died of apoplexy! If it was, it was a mental apoplexy. Tired with fruitless efforts to gain his purpose, Johnstone at last permitted Alice to depart. In a few hours she was at her father's house; but it was desolate and silent. A paper, which was put into my hands, was evidently written by Alice. She expressed her determination to follow her dear father into another and a better world, and hoped Heaven would forgive her. It was her funeral I met at Enterkin. Hers was

“The poor suicide's grave.”



## THE SALMON-FISHER OF UDOLL.

IN the autumn of 1759, the Bay of Udoll, an arm of the sea which intersects the southern shore of the Frith of Cromarty, was occupied by two large salmon wears, the property of one Allan Thomson, a native of the province of Moray, who had settled in this part of the country a few months before. He was a thin, athletic, raw-boned man, of about five feet ten, well nigh in his thirtieth year, but apparently younger; erect and clean-limbed, with a set of handsome features, bright intelligent eyes, and a profusion of dark-brown hair, curling round an ample expanse of forehead. For the first twenty years of his life, he had lived about a farm-house, tending cattle when a boy, and guiding the plough when he had grown up; he then travelled into England, where he wrought about seven years as a common labourer. A novelist would scarcely make choice of such a person for the hero of a tale; but men are to be estimated rather by the size and colour of their minds, than the complexion of their circumstances; and this ploughman and labourer of the north was by no means a very common man. For the latter half of his life, he had pursued, in all his undertakings, one main design. He saw his brother rustics tied down by circumstance—that destiny of vulgar minds—to a youth of toil and dependence, and an old age of destitution and wretchedness; and, with a force of character which, had he been placed at his outset on what may be termed the table-land of fortune, would have raised him to her higher pinnacles, he persisted in adding shilling to shilling and pound to pound.



not in the sordid spirit of the miser, but in the hope that his little hoard might yet serve him as a kind of stepping-stone in rising to a more comfortable place in society. Nor were his desires fixed very high; for, convinced that independence and the happiness which springs from situation in life lie within the reach of the frugal farmer of sixty or eighty acres, he moulded his ambition on the conviction; and scarcely looked beyond the period at which he anticipated his savings would enable him to take his place among the humbler tenantry of the country.

Our firths and estuaries at this period abounded with salmon—one of the earliest exports of the kingdom; but from the low state into which commerce had sunk in the northern districts, and the irregularity of the communication kept up between them and the sister kingdom, by far the greater part caught on our shores were consumed by the inhabitants. And so little were they deemed a luxury, that it was by no means uncommon, it is said, for servants to stipulate with their masters that they should not have to diet on salmon oftener than thrice a-week. Thomson, however, had seen quite enough, when in England, to convince him, that, meanly as they were esteemed by his countryfolks, they might be rendered the staple of a profitable trade; and, removing to the vicinity of Cromarty, for the facilities it afforded in trading to the capital, he launched boldly into the speculation. He erected his two wears with his own hands; built himself a cottage of sods on the gorge of a little ravine, sprinkled over with bushes of alder and hazel; entered into correspondence with a London merchant, whom he engaged as his agent; and began to export his fish by two large sloops, which plied, at this period, between the neighbouring port and the capital. His fishings were abundant, and his agent an honest one; and he soon began to realize the sums he had expended in establishing himself in the trade.



Could any one anticipate that a story of fondly-cherished, but hapless attachment—of one heart blighted for ever, and another fatally broken—was to follow such an introduction?

The first season of Thomson's speculation had come to a close; winter set in; and, with scarcely a single acquaintance among the people in the neighbourhood, and little to employ him, he had to draw for amusement on his own resources alone. He had formed, when a boy, a taste for reading; and might now be found in the long evenings, hanging over a book, beside the fire; by day, he went sauntering among the fields, calculating on the advantages of every agricultural improvement; or attended the fairs and trysts of the country, to speculate on the profits of the drover and cattle-feeder, and make himself acquainted with all the little mysteries of bargain-making.

There holds, early in November, a famous cattle market in the ancient barony of Ferntosh; and Thomson had set out to attend it. The morning was clear and frosty, and he felt buoyant of heart and limb, as passing westwards along the shore, he saw the huge Ben-Nevis towering darker and more loftily over the Frith as he advanced; or turned aside, from time to time, to explore some ancient burying-ground or Danish encampment. There is not a tract of country of equal extent in the three kingdoms, where antiquities of this class lie thicker than in that northern strip of the parish of Resolis which bounds on the Cromarty Frith. The old castle of Craig House, a venerable, time-shattered building, detained him, amid its broken arches, for hours; and he was only reminded of the ultimate object of his journey, when, on surveying the moor from the upper bartizan, he saw that the groups of men and cattle which, since morning, had been mottling in succession the track leading to the fair, were all gone out of sight; and that, far as the eye could reach not a human



figure was to be seen. The whole population of the country seemed to have gone to the fair. He quitted the ruins, and, after walking smartly over the heathy ridge to the west, and through the long birch-wood of Kinbeakie, he reached about mid-day the little straggling village at which the market holds.

Thomson had never before attended a thoroughly Highland market; and the scene now presented was wholly new to him. The area it occupied was an irregular opening in the middle of the village, broken by ruts, and dung-hills, and heaps of stone. In front of the little turf-houses on either side, there was a row of booths, constructed mostly of poles and blankets, in which much whisky, and a few of the simpler articles of foreign merchandise, were sold. In the middle of the open space, there were carts and benches, laden with the rude manufactures of the country—Highland brogues and blankets; bowls and platters of beech; a species of horse and cattle harness, formed of the twisted twigs of birch; bundles of split fir, for lath and torches; and hair tackle and nets, for fishermen. Nearly seven thousand persons, male and female, thronged the area bustling and busy, and in continual motion, like the tides and eddies of two rivers at their confluence. There were countrywomen, with their shaggy little horses, laden with cheese and butter; Highlanders from the far hills, with droves of sheep and cattle; shoemakers and weavers, from the neighbouring villages, with bales of webs and wallets of shoes; farmers and fishermen, engaged as it chanced in buying or selling; bebies of bonny lasses, attired in their gayest; ploughmen and mechanics; drovers, butchers, and herd-boys. Whisky flowed abundantly, whether bargain-makers bought or sold, or friends met or parted; and, as the day wore later, the confusion and bustle of the crowd increased. A Highland tryst, even in the present age, rarely passes without witnessing a fray; and the Highlanders,



seventy years ago, were of more combative dispositions than they are now; but Thomson, who had neither friend nor enemy among the thousands around him, neither quarreled himself, nor interfered in the quarrels of others. He merely stood and looked on, as a European would among the frays of one of the great fairs of Bagdad or Astracan.

He was passing through the crowd, towards evening, in front of one of the dingier cottages, when a sudden burst of oaths and exclamations rose from within, and the inmates came pouring out pell-mell at the door, to throttle and pummel one another, in inextricable confusion. A grey headed old man, of great apparent strength, who seemed by far the most formidable of the combatants, was engaged in desperate battle with two young fellows from the remote Highlands, while all the others were matched man to man. Thomson, whose residence in England had taught him very different notions of fair play and the ring, was on the eve of forgetting his caution and interfering; but the interference proved unnecessary. Ere he had stepped up to the combatants, the old man, with a vigour little lessened by age, had shaken off both his opponents; and, though they stood glaring at him like tiger cats, neither of them seemed in the least inclined to renew the attack.

“Twa mean pitiful kerns,” exclaimed the old man, “to tak odds against ane auld enough to be their faither! an that, too, after burning my loof wi’ the het airn! But I hae noited their twa heads thegither! Sic a trick!—to bid me stir up the fire, after they had heated the wrang end o’ the poker! Deil but I hae a guid mind to gie them baith mair o’t yet!”

Ere he could make good his threat, however, his daughter, a delicate-looking girl of nineteen, came rushing up to him through the crowd. “Father!” she exclaimed, “dearest father! let us away. For my sake, if not your own, let these wild men alone; they always carry knives; and,



besides, you will bring all of their clan upon you that are at the tryst, and you will be murdered."

"No muckle danger frae that, Lillias," said the old man. "I hae little fear frae ony ane o' them; an' if they come by twasome, I hae my friends here to. The ill-deedy wratches, to blister a' my loof wi' the poker! But come awa, lassie; your advice is, I daresay, best after a'."

The old man quitted the place with his daughter; and, for the time, Thomson saw no more of him. As the night approached, the Highlanders became more noisy and turbulent; they drank, and disputed, and drove their very bargains at the dirk's point; and, as the salmon-fisher passed through the village for the last time, he could see the waving of bludgeons, and hear the formidable war-cry of one of the clans, with the equally formidable, "Hilloa! help for Cromarty!" echoing on every side of him. He kept coolly on his way, however, without waiting the result; and while yet several miles from the shores of Udoll, daylight had departed, and the moon at full had risen, red and huge in the frosty atmosphere, over the bleak hill of Nigg.

He had reached the burn of Newhall—a small stream, which, after winding for several miles between its double row of alders, and its thickets of gorse and hazel, falls into the upper part of the bay—and was cautiously picking his way, by the light of the moon, along a narrow pathway which winds among the bushes. There are few places in the country of worse repute among believers in the supernatural than the burn of Newhall; and its character seventy years ago was even worse than it is at present. Witch meetings without number have been held on its banks, and dead lights have been seen hovering over its deeper pools. Sportsmen have charged their fowling-pieces with silver when crossing it in the night-time; and I remember an old man who never approached it after dark without fixing a



bayonet on the head of his staff. Thomson, however, was but little influenced by the beliefs of the period; and he was passing under the shadow of the alders, with more of this world than of the other in his thoughts, when the silence was suddenly broken by a burst of threats and exclamations, as if several men had fallen a-fighting, scarcely fifty yards away, without any preliminary quarrel; and, with the gruffer noises, there mingled the shrieks and entreaties of a female. Thomson grasped his stick and sprang forward. He reached an opening among the bushes, and saw in the imperfect light the old robust Lowlander of the previous fray attacked by two men armed with bludgeons, and defending himself manfully with his staff. The old man's daughter, who had clung round the knees of one of the ruffians, was already thrown to the ground and trampled under foot. An exclamation of wrath and horror burst from the high-spirited fisherman, as, rushing upon the fellow like a tiger from its jungle, he caught the stroke aimed at him on his stick, and with a sidelong blow on the temple, felled him to the ground. At the instant he fell, a gigantic Highlander leaped from among the bushes, and raising his huge arm, discharged a tremendous blow at the head of the fisherman, who, though taken unawares and at a disadvantage, succeeded, notwithstanding, in transferring it to his left shoulder, where it fell broken and weak. A desperate but brief combat ensued. The ferocity and ponderous strength of the Celt, found their more than match in the cool, vigilant skill, and leopard-like agility of the Lowland Scot; for the latter, after discharging a storm of blows on the head, face, and shoulders of the giant, until he staggered, at length struck his bludgeon out of his hand, and prostrated his whole huge length by dashing his stick end-long against his breast. At nearly the same moment the burly old farmer, who had grappled with his antagonist, had succeeded in flinging him, stunned and senseless, against the



gnarled root of an alder; and the three ruffians—for the first had not yet recovered—lay stretched on the grass. Ere they could secure them, however, a shrill whistle was heard echoing from among the alders, scarcely a hundred yards away. “We had better get home,” said Thomson to the old man, “ere these fellows are reinforced by their brother ruffians in the wood.” And, supporting the maiden with his one hand, and grasping his stick with the other, he plunged among the bushes in the direction of the path, and, gaining it, passed onward, lightly and hurriedly, with his charge; the old man followed more heavily behind; and, in somewhat less than an hour after, they were all seated beside the hearth of the latter, in the farm-house of Meikle Farness.

It is now more than forty years since the last stone of the very foundation has disappeared; but the little grassy eminence on which the house stood may still be seen. There is a deep-wooded ravine behind, which, after winding through the table-land of the parish, like a huge crooked furrow—the bed evidently of some antediluvian stream—opens far below to the sea; an undulating tract of field and moor—with here and there a thicket of bushes, and here and there a heap of stone—spreads in front. When I last looked on the scene, ’twas in the evening of a pleasant day in June. One half the eminence was bathed in the red light of the setting sun—the other lay brown and dark in the shadow. A flock of sheep were scattered over the sunny side; the herd-boy sat on the top, solacing his leisure with a music famous in the pastoral history of Scotland, but now well-nigh exploded—that of the *stock* and *horn*; and the air seemed filled with its echoes. I stood picturing to myself the appearance of the place, ere all the inmates of this evening, young and old, had gone to the churchyard, and left no successors behind them; and as I sighed over the vanity of human hopes, I could almost fancy I saw an



apparition of the cottage rising on the knoll. I could see the dark turf walls; the little square windows, barred below and glazed above; the straw roof, embossed with moss and stone-crop; and, high overhead, the row of venerable elms, with their gnarled trunks and twisted branches that rose out of the garden wall. Fancy gives an interest to all her pictures—yes, even when the subject is but a humble cottage; and when we think of human enjoyment—of the pride of strength and the light of beauty—in connection with a few mouldering and nameless bones hidden deep from the sun, there is a sad poetry in the contrast which rarely fails to affect the heart. It is now two thousand years since Horace sung of the security of the lowly, and the unfluctuating nature of their enjoyments; and every year of the two thousand has been adding proof to proof that the poet, when he chose his theme, must have thrown aside his philosophy. But the inmates of the farm-house thought little this evening of coming misfortune—nor would it have been well if they had; their sorrow was neither heightened nor hastened by their joy.

Old William Stewart, the farmer, was one of a class well-nigh worn out in the southern Lowlands, even at this period; but which still comprised in the northern districts no inconsiderable portion of the people; and which must always obtain in countries only partially civilized and little amenable to the laws. Man is a fighting animal from very instinct; and his second nature, custom, mightily improves the propensity. A person naturally courageous, who has defended himself successfully in half-a-dozen different frays, will, very probably, begin the seventh himself; and there are few who have fought often and well for safety and the right, who have not at length learned to love fighting for its own sake. The old farmer had been a man of war from his youth. He had fought at fairs, and trysts, and weddings, and funerals, and, without one ill-natured or malig-



nant element in his composition, had broken more heads than any two men in the country side. His late quarrel at the tryst, and the much more serious affair among the bushes, had arisen out of this disposition; for, though well-nigh in his sixtieth year, he was still as warlike in his habits as ever. Thomson sat fronting him beside the fire, admiring his muscular frame, huge limbs, and immense structure of bone. Age had grizzled his hair and furrowed his cheeks and forehead; but all the great strength, and well-nigh all the activity of his youth, it had left him still. His wife, a sharp-featured, little woman, seemed little interested in either the details of his adventure or his guest, whom he described as the "brave, hardy chield, wha had beaten twasome at the cudgel—the vera littlest o' them as big as himsel."

"Och, guidman," was her concluding remark, "ye aye stick to the auld trade, bad though it be; an' I'm feared that, or ye mend, ye maun be aulder yet. I'm sure ye ne'er made your ain money o't."

"Nane o' yer nonsense," rejoined the farmer—"bring butt the bottle an' your best cheese."

"The guidwife an' I dinna aye agree," continued the old man, turning to Thomson. "She's baith near-gaun an' new-fangled; an' I like aye to hae routh o' a' things, an' to live just as my faithers did afore me. Why sould I bother my head wi' *improvidments*, as they ca' them? The country's gane clean gite wi' pride, Thomson. Naething less sairs folk noo, forsooth, than carts wi' wheels to them; an' it's no a fortnight syne sin' little Sandy Martin, the trifling cat, jeered me for yoking my owsen to the plough by the tail. What ither did they get tails for?"

Thomson had not sufficiently studied the grand argument of design in this special instance, to hazard a reply.

"The times hae gane clean oot o' joint," continued the old man. "The law has come a' the length o' Cromarty



noo; an' for breaking the head o' an impudent fallow, ane runs the risk o' being sent aff to the plantations. Faith, I wish oor Parliamenters had mair sense. What do they ken aboot us or oor country? Diel haet difference do they mak atween the shire o' Cromarty an' the shire o' Lunnon; just as if we could be as quiet beside the red-wud Hielanmen here, as they can be beside the queen. Na, na—naething like a guid cudgel;—little wad their law hae dune for me at the burn o' Newhall the nicht."

Thomson found the character of the old man quite a study in its way; and that of his wife—a very different, and, in the main, inferior sort of person, for she was mean-spirited and a niggard—quite a study too. But by far the most interesting inmate of the cottage was the old man's daughter—the child of a former marriage. She was a pale, delicate, blue-eyed girl, who, without possessing much positive beauty of feature, had that expression of mingled thought and tenderness which attracts more powerfully than beauty itself. She spoke but little—that little, however, was expressive of gratitude and kindness to the deliverer of her father—sentiments which, in the breast of a girl so gentle, so timid, so disposed to shrink from the roughnesses of active courage, and yet so conscious of her need of a protector, must have mingled with a feeling of admiration at finding, in the powerful champion of the recent fray, a modest, sensible young man, of manners nearly as quiet and unobtrusive as her own. She dreamed that night of Thomson, and her first thought, as she awakened next morning, was whether, as her father had urged, he was to be a frequent visitor at Meikle Farness. But an entire week passed away, and she saw no more of him.

He was sitting one evening in his cottage, poring over a book—a huge fire of brushwood was blazing against the earthen wall, filling the upper part of the single rude chamber of which the cottage consisted with a dense cloud of



smoke, and glancing brightly on the few rude implements which occupied the lower—when the door suddenly opened, and the farmer of Meikle Farness entered, accompanied by his daughter.

“Ha! Allan, man,” he said, extending his large hand and grasping that of the fisherman; “if you winna come an’ see us, we maun just come an’ see you. Lillias an’ mysel were afraid the guidwife had frichtened you awa—for she’s a near-gaun sort o’ body, an’ maybe no owre kind spoken; but ye maun just come an’ see us whiles, an’ no mind her. Except at counting-time, I never mind her mysel.” Thomson accommodated his visitors with seats. “Yer life maun be a gay lonely ane here, in this eerie bit o’ a glen,” remarked the old man, after they had conversed for some time on indifferent subjects; “but I see ye dinna want company a’thegither, such as it is”—his eye glancing as he spoke over a set of deal shelves, occupied by some sixty or seventy volumes. “Lillias there has a liking for that kind o’ company too, an’ spends some days mair o’ her time amang her books than the guidwife or mysel would wish.”

Lillias blushed at the charge, and hung down her head; it gave, however, a new turn to the conversation; and Thomson was gratified to find that the quiet, gentle girl, who seemed so much interested in him, and whose gratitude to him, expressed in a language less equivocal than any spoken one, he felt to be so delicious a compliment, possessed a cultivated mind and a superior understanding. She had lived, under the roof of her father, in a little paradise of thoughts and imaginations, the spontaneous growth of her own mind; and, as she grew up to womanhood, she had recourse to the companionship of books—for in books only could she find thoughts and imaginations of a kindred character.

It is rarely that the female mind educates itself. The



genius of the sex is rather fine than robust; it partakes rather of the delicacy of the myrtle, than the strength of the oak; and care and culture seem essential to its full development. Who ever heard of a female Burns or Bloomfield? And yet there have been instances, though rare, of women working their way from the lower levels of intellect to well-nigh the highest—not wholly unassisted, 'tis true—the age must be a cultivated one, and there must be opportunities of observation; but, if not wholly unassisted, with helps so slender, that the second order of masculine minds would find them wholly inefficient. There is a quickness of perception and facility of adaptation in the better class of female minds—an ability of catching the tone of whatever is good from the sounding of a single note, if I may so express myself, which we almost never meet with in the mind of man. Lillias was a favourable specimen of the better and more intellectual order of women; but she was yet very young, and the process of self-cultivation carrying on in her mind was still incomplete. And Thomson found that the charm of her society arose scarcely more from her partial knowledge, than from her partial ignorance. The following night saw him seated by her side in the farmhouse of Meikle Farness; and scarcely a week passed during the winter in which he did not spend at least one evening in her company.

Who is it that has not experienced the charm of female conversation—that poetry of feeling which develops all of tenderness and all of imagination that lies hidden in our nature? When following the ordinary concerns of life, or engaged in its more active businesses, many of the better faculties of our minds seem overlaid; there is little of feeling and nothing of fancy; and those sympathies which should bind us to the good and fair of nature, lie repressed and inactive. But in the society of an intelligent and virtuous female, there is a charm that removes the pressure.



Through the force of sympathy, we throw our intellects for the time into the female mould; our tastes assimilate to the tastes of our companion; our feelings keep pace with hers; our sensibilities become nicer, and our imaginations more expansive; and, though the powers of our mind may not much excel, in kind or degree, those of the great bulk of mankind, we are sensible that, for the time, we experience some of the feelings of genius. How many common men have not female society and the fervour of youthful passion sublimed into poets! I am convinced the Greeks displayed as much sound philosophy as good taste in representing their muses as beautiful women.

Thomson had formerly been but an admirer of the poets—he now became a poet; and, had his fate been a kindlier one, he might perhaps have attained a middle place among at least the minor professors of the incommunicable art. He was walking with Lillias one evening through the wooded ravine. It was early in April, and the day had combined the loveliest smiles of spring with the fiercer blasts of winter. There was snow in the hollows; but, where the sweeping sides of the dell reclined to the south, the violet and the primrose were opening to the sun. The drops of a recent shower were still hanging on the half-expanded buds, and the streamlet was yet red and turbid; but the sun, nigh at his setting, was streaming in golden glory along the field, and a lark was caroling high in the air, as if its day were but begun. Lillias pointed to the bird, diminished almost to a speck, but relieved by the red light against a minute cloudlet.

“Happy little creature!” she exclaimed—“does it not seem rather a thing of heaven than of earth? Does not its song frae the cloud mind you of the hymn heard by the shepherds? The blast is but just owre, an’ a few minutes syne it lay cowering and chittering in its nest; but its sorrows are a’ gane, an’ its heart rejoices in the



bonny blink, without ae thought o' the storm that has passed, or the night that comes on. Were you a poet, Allan, like any o' your two namesakes—he o' "The Seasons," or he o' the "Gentle Shepherd"—I would ask you for a song on that bonny burdie." Next time the friends met, Thomson produced the following verses:—

#### TO THE LARK.

Sweet minstrel of the April cloud!  
 Dweller the flowers among!  
 Would that my heart were formed like thine,  
 And tun'd like thine my song!  
 Not to the earth, like earth's low gifts,  
 Thy soothing strain is given;  
 It comes a voice from middle sky,  
 A solace breathed from heaven.

Thine is the morn; and when the sun  
 Sinks peaceful in the west,  
 The mild light of departing day  
 Purples thy happy breast.  
 And, ah! though all beneath that sun  
 Dire pains and sorrows dwell,  
 Rarely they visit, short they stay,  
 Where thou hast built thy cell.

When wild winds rave, and snows descend  
 And dark clouds gather fast,  
 And on the surf-encircled shore  
 The seaman's bark is cast—  
 Long human grief survives the storm,  
 But thou, thrice happy bird!  
 No sooner has it passed away,  
 Than, lo! thy voice is heard.

When ill is present, grief is thine;  
 It flies, and thou art free;  
 But, ah! can aught achieve for man  
 What nature does for thee!  
 Man grieves amid the bursting storm;  
 When smiles the calm he grieves;  
 Nor cease his woes, nor sinks his plaint  
 Till dust his dust receives.



As the latter month of spring came on, the fisherman again betook himself to his wears, and nearly a fortnight passed in which he saw none of the inmates of the farmhouse. Nothing is so efficient as absence, whether self-imposed or the result of circumstances, in convincing a lover that he is truly such, and in teaching him how to estimate the strength of his attachment. Thomson had sat, night after night, beside Lillias Stewart, delighted with the delicacy of her taste and the originality and beauty of her ideas—delighted, too, to watch the still partially developed faculties of her mind, shooting forth and expanding into bud and blossom under the fostering influence of his own more matured powers. But the pleasure which arises from the interchange of idea and the contemplation of mental beauty, or the interest which every thinking mind must feel in marking the aspirations of a superior intellect towards its proper destiny, is not love; and it was only now that Thomson ascertained the true scope and nature of his feelings.

“She is already my *friend*,” thought he; “if my schemes prosper, I shall be in a few years what her father is now; and may then ask her whether she will not be *more*. Till then, however, she shall be my friend, and my friend only; I find I love her too well to make her the wife of either a poor, unsettled speculator, or still poorer labourer.”

He renewed his visits to the farm-house, and saw, with a discernment quickened by his feelings, that his mistress had made a discovery with regard to her own affections somewhat similar to his, and at a somewhat earlier period. She herself could have, perhaps, fixed the date of it by referring to that of their acquaintance. He imparted to her his scheme and the uncertainties which attended it, with his determination, were he unsuccessful in his designs, to do battle with the evils of penury and dependence without a companion; and, though she felt that she could deem



it a happiness to make common cause with him even in such a contest, she knew how to appreciate his motives, and loved him all the more for them. Never, perhaps, in the whole history of the passion, were there two lovers happier in their hopes and each other. But there was a cloud gathering over them.

Thomson had never been an especial favourite with the stepmother of Lillias. She had formed plans of her own for the settlement of her daughter, with which the attentions of the salmon-fisher threatened materially to interfere. And there was a total want of sympathy between them besides. Even William, though he still retained a sort of rough regard for him, had begun to look askance on his intimacy with Lillias;—his avowed love, too, for the modern, gave no little offence. The farm of Meikle Farness was obsolete enough in its usages and modes of tillage, to have formed no uninteresting study to the antiquary. Towards autumn, when the fields vary most in colour, it resembled a rudely executed chart of some large island—so irregular were the patches which composed it, and so broken on every side by a surrounding sea of moor, that here and there went winding into the interior in long river-like strips, or expanded, within, into friths and lakes. In one corner there stood a heap of stones, in another a thicket of furze—here a piece of bog, there a broken bank of clay. The implements with which the old man laboured in his fields were as primitive in their appearance as the fields themselves—there was the one-stilted plough, the wooden-toothed harrow, and the basket-woven cart, with its rollers of wood. With these, too, there was the usual misproportion on the farm, to its extent, of lean, inefficient cattle, four half-starved animals performing, with incredible effort, the work of one. Thomson would fain have induced the old man, who was evidently sinking in the world, to have recourse to a better system—but he gained wondrous little



by his advice. And there was another cause which operated still more decidedly against him: a wealthy young farmer in the neighbourhood had been, for the last few months, not a little diligent in his attentions to Lillias. He had lent the old man, at the preceding term, a considerable sum of money; and had ingratiated himself with the stepmother, by chiming in on all occasions with her humour, and by a present or two besides. Under the auspices of both parents, therefore, he had now paid his addresses to Lillias; and, on meeting with a repulse, had stirred them both up against Thomson.

The fisherman was engaged one evening in fishing his nets; the ebb was that of a stream tide, and the bottom of almost the entire bay lay exposed to the light of the setting sun, save that a river-like strip of water wound through the midst. He had brought his gun with him, in the hope of finding a seal or otter asleep on the outer banks; but there were none this evening; and, laying down his piece against one of the poles of the wear, he was employed in capturing a fine salmon that went darting like a bird from side to side of the inner enclosure, when he heard some one hailing him by name from outside the nets. He looked up, and saw three men, one of whom he recognised as the young farmer who was paying his addresses to Lillias, approaching from the opposite side of the bay. They were all apparently much in liquor, and came staggering towards him in a zig-zag track along the sands. A suspicion crossed his mind that he might find them other than friendly; and, coming out of the enclosure, where, from the narrowness of the space and the depth of the water, he would have lain much at their mercy, he employed himself in picking off the patches of sea-weed that adhered to the nets, when they came up to him and assailed him with a torrent of threats and reproaches. He pursued his occupation with the utmost coolness, turning round, from time to time, to



repay their abuse by some cutting repartee. His assailants discovered they were to gain little in this sort of contest; and Thomson found in turn that they were much less disguised in liquor than he had at first supposed, or than they seemed desirous to make it appear. In reply to one of his more cutting sarcasms, the tallest of the three, a ruffian-looking fellow, leaped forward and struck him on the face; and in a moment he had returned the blow with such hearty good-will that the fellow was dashed against one of the poles. The other two rushed in to close with him. He seized his gun, and, springing out from beside the nets to the open bank, dealt the farmer, with the but-end a tremendous blow on the face, which prostrated him in an instant; and then cocking the piece and presenting it, he commanded the other two, on peril of their lives, to stand aloof. Odds of weapons, when there is courage to avail oneself of them, forms a thorough counterbalance to odds of number. After an engagement of a brief half minute, Thomson's assailants left him in quiet possession of the field; and he found, on his way home, that he could trace their route by the blood of the young farmer. There went abroad an exaggerated and very erroneous edition of the story, highly unfavourable to the salmon-fisher; and he received an intimation, shortly after, that his visits at the farm-house were no longer expected. But the intimation came not from Lillias.

The second year of his speculation had well-nigh come to a close, and, in calculating on the quantum of his shipments and the state of the markets, he could deem it a more successful one than even the first. But his agent seemed to be assuming a new and worse character: he either substituted promises and apologies for his usual remittances, or neglected writing altogether; and, as the fisherman was employed one day in dismantling his wears for the season, his worst fears were realized by the astounding intelligence



that the embarrassments of the merchant had at length terminated in a final suspension of payments!

"There," said he, with a coolness which partook in its nature in no slight degree of that insensibility of pain and injury which follows a violent blow—"there go well-nigh all the hard-earned savings of twelve years, and all my hopes of happiness with Lillias!" He gathered up his utensils with an automaton-like carefulness, and, throwing them over his shoulders, struck across the sands in the direction of the cottage. "I must see *her*," he said, "once more, and bid her farewell." His heart swelled to his throat at the thought; but, as if ashamed of his weakness, he struck his foot firmly against the sand, and, proudly raising himself to his full height, quickened his pace. He reached the door, and, looking wistfully, as he raised the latch, in the direction of the farm-house, his eye caught a female figure coming towards the cottage through the bushes of the ravine. "'Tis poor Lillias!" he exclaimed. "Can she already have heard that I am unfortunate, and that we must part?" He went up to her, and, as he pressed her hand between both his, she burst into tears.

It was a sad meeting—meetings must ever be such when the parties that compose them bring each a separate grief, which becomes common when imparted.

"I cannot tell you," said Lillias to her lover, "how unhappy I am. My stepmother has not much love to bestow on any one; and so, though it be in her power to deprive me of the quiet I value so much, I care comparatively little for her resentment. Why should I not? She is interested in no one but herself. As for Simpson, I can despise without hating him; wasps sting, just because it is their nature, and some people seem born in the same way, to be mean-spirited and despicable. But my poor father, who has been so kind to me, and who has so much heart about him—his displeasure has the bitterness of



death to me. And then he is so wildly and unjustly angry with you. Simpson has got him, by some means, into his power—I know not how; my stepmother annoys him continually; and, from the state of irritation in which he is kept, he is saying and doing the most violent things imaginable, and making me so unhappy by his threats.” And she again burst into tears.

Thomson had but little of comfort to impart to her. Indeed he could afterwards wonder at the indifference with which he beheld her tears, and the coolness with which he communicated to her the story of his disaster. But he had not yet recovered his natural tone of feeling. Who has not observed that, while, in men of an inferior and weaker cast, any sudden and overwhelming misfortune unsettles their whole minds, and all is storm and uproar, in minds of a superior order, when subjected to the same ordeal, there takes place a kind of freezing, hardening process, under which they maintain at least apparent coolness and self-possession? Grief acts as a powerful solvent to the one class—to the other, it is as the waters of a petrifying spring.

“Alas, my Lillias!” said the fisherman, “we have not been born for happiness and each other. We must part—each of us to struggle with our respective evils. Call up all your strength of mind—the much in your character that has as yet lain unemployed—and so despicable a thing as Simpson will not dare to annoy you. You may yet meet with a man worthy of you; some one who will love you as well as—as one who can at least appreciate your value, and who will deserve you better.” As he spoke, and his mistress listened in silence and in tears, William Stewart burst in upon them through the bushes; and with a countenance flushed, and a frame tremulous with passion, assailed the fisherman with a torrent of threats and reproaches. He even raised his hand. The prudence of



Thomson gave way under the provocation. Ere the blow had descended, he had locked the farmer in his grasp, and with an exertion of strength which scarcely a giant would be capable of in a moment of less excitement, he raised him from the earth, and forced him against the grassy side of the ravine, where he held him despite of his efforts. A shriek from Lillias recalled him to the command of himself. "William Stewart," he said, quitting his hold and stepping back, "you are an old man, and the father of Lillias." The farmer rose slowly and collectedly, with a flushed cheek but a quiet eye, as if all his anger had evaporated in the struggle, and, turning to his daughter—

"Come, Lillias, my lassie," he said, laying hold of her arm, "I have been too hasty—I have been in the wrong." And so they parted.

Winter came on, and Thomson was again left to the solitude of his cottage, with only his books and his own thoughts to employ him. He found little amusement or comfort in either; he could think of only Lillias—that she loved and was yet lost to him.

"Generous, and affectionate, and confiding," he has said, when thinking of her, "I know she would willingly share with me in my poverty; but ill would I repay her kindness in demanding of her such a sacrifice. Besides, how could I endure to see her subjected to the privations of a destiny so humble as mine? The same heaven that seems to have ordained me to labour and to be unsuccessful, has given me a mind not to be broken by either toil or disappointment; but keenly and bitterly would I feel the evils of both, were she to be equally exposed. I must strive to forget her, or think of her only as my friend." And, indulging in such thoughts as these, and repeating and re-repeating similar resolutions—only, however, to find them unavailing—winter, with its long, dreary nights, and its days of languor and inactivity, passed heavily away. But it passed.



He was sitting beside his fire, one evening late in February, when a gentle knock was heard at the door. He started up, and, drawing back the bar, William Stewart entered the apartment.

"Allan," said the old man, "I have come to have some conversation with you, and would have come sooner, but pride and shame kept me back. I fear I have been much to blame."

Thomson motioned him to a seat, and sat down beside him.

"Farmer," he said, "since we cannot recall the past, we had, perhaps, better forget it."

The old man bent forward his head till it rested almost on his knee, and for a few moments remained silent.

"I fear, Allan, I have been much to blame," he at length reiterated. "Ye maun come an' see Lillias. She is ill, very ill—an' I fear no very like to get better." Thomson was stunned by the intelligence, and answered he scarcely knew what. "She has never been richt hersel," continued the old man, "sin' the unlucky day when you an' I met in the burn here; but for the last month she has been little out o' her bed. Since mornin there has been a great change on her, an' she wishes to see you. I fear we havena meikle time to spare, an' had better gang." Thomson followed him in silence.

They reached the farm-house of Meikle Farness, and entered the chamber where the maiden lay. A bright fire of brushwood threw a flickering gloom on the floor and rafters, and their shadows, as they advanced, seemed dancing on the walls. Close beside the bed there was a small table, bearing a lighted candle, and with a Bible lying open upon it, at that chapter of Corinthians in which the Apostle assures us that the dead shall rise and the mortal put on immortality. Lillias half sat, half reclined, in the upper part of the bed. Her thin and wasted features



had already the stiff rigidity of death, her cheeks and lips were colourless, and, though the blaze seemed to dance and flicker on her half-closed eyes, they served no longer to intimate to the departing spirit the existence of external things.

"Ah, my Lillias!" exclaimed Thomson, as he bent over her, his heart swelling with an intense agony. "Alas! has it come to this!"

His well-known voice served to recall her, as from the precincts of another world. A faint melancholy smile passed over her features, and she held out her hand.

"I was afraid," she said, in a voice sweet and gentle as ever, though scarcely audible through extreme weakness, "I was afraid that I was never to see you more. Draw nearer—there is a darkness coming over me, and I hear but imperfectly. I may now say with a propriety which no one will challenge, what I durst not have said before. Need I tell you that you were the dearest of all my friends—the only man I ever loved—the man whose lot, however low and unprosperous, I would have deemed it a happiness to be invited to share? I do not, however—I cannot reproach you. I depart and for ever; but, oh, let not a single thought of me render you unhappy; my few years of life have not been without their pleasures, and I go to a better and brighter world. I am weak and cannot say more; but let me hear you speak. Read to me the eighth chapter of Romans."

Thomson, with a voice tremulous and faltering through emotion, read the chapter. Ere he had made an end, the maiden had again sunk into the state of apparent insensibility out of which she had been so lately awakened; though, occasionally, a faint pressure of his hand, which she still retained, shewed him that she was not unconscious of his presence. At length, however, there was a total relaxation of the grasp—the cold damp of the stiffening palm



struck a chill to his heart—there was a fluttering of the pulse, a glazing of the eye—the breast ceased to heave, the heart to beat—the silver cord parted in twain, and the golden bowl was broken. Thomson contemplated, for a moment, the body of his mistress, and, striking his hand against his forehead, rushed out of the apartment.

He attended her funeral—he heard the earth falling heavy and hollow on the coffin-lid—he saw the green sod placed over her grave—he witnessed the irrepressible anguish of her father, and the sad regret of her friends—and all this without shedding a tear. He was turning to depart, when some one thrust a letter into his hand; he opened it almost mechanically. It contained a considerable sum of money, and a few lines from his agent, stating that, in consequence of a favourable change in his circumstances, he had been enabled to satisfy all his creditors. Thomson crumpled up the bills in his hand. He felt as if his heart stood still in his breast; a noise seemed ringing in his ears; a mist cloud appeared as if rising out of the earth and darkening round him. He was caught, when falling, by old William Stewart, and, on awakening to consciousness and the memory of the past, found himself in his arms. He lived for about ten years after, a laborious and speculative man, ready to oblige, and successful in all his designs. And no one deemed him unhappy. It was observed, however, that his dark brown hair was soon mingled with masses of grey, and that his tread became heavy and his frame bent. It was remarked, too, that, when attacked by a lingering epidemic, which passed over well-nigh the whole country, he of all the people was the only one that sank under it.



THE LINTON LAIRDS, OR EXCLUSIVES AND  
INCLUSIVES.

IN no part of her Majesty's wide-spread dominions does mighty Aristocracy rear its proud head with greater majesty than at Linton. There are, or were, in the neighbourhood of that ancient borough, no fewer than forty-five lairds, all possessing portions of the soil; and from the soil it is that the big genius of aristocratic pride derives, like the old oak, the pith of her power. It is of no avail to say—and we, being ourselves of an ancient family, as poor as the old dark denizens of the soil who were displaced by the Norwegian brown species, despise the taunt—that fifteen out of the whole number of Linton lairds were, at one period, on the poor's box. Gentry, with old noble blood in their veins, are not a whit less to be valued that they are beggars, for it is the peculiar character of gentle blood, that it never gets thinner by poor meat. A low marriage sometimes deteriorates it; and hence the horror of the privileged species at that kind of degradation; but the tenth cousin of a scurvy baronet will retain the purity of the noble fluid, in spite of husks, acorns, and onions. All the efforts of the patriots called radicals—even if they should have recourse to the starving system, by taking the properties of their masters—will never be able to bring down to a proper popular equal consistency the blood of the old stock; and so long as they dare not, for the spilling of their own thin stuff, *let out* the life stream of their lords, they must submit to see it running in the old channels as



ruby and routhy as it did in the reign of Malcolm Canmore.

But you may say that Laird Geddes of Cauldshouthers was no Linton laird, and was never on the poor's box. Take it as you please, we will not dispute with you if you come from Tweeddale. You are, perhaps, of the old Hamiltons of Cauldcoats, or the Bertrams of Duckpool, or the Hays of Glenmuck, or the old tory lairds of Bogend, Hallmyre, or Windylaws, and may challenge us, like a true knight, for endeavouring to reduce the grandeur of your compeers; and therefore, to keep peace, we will be contented with the admission that Gilbert Geddes was the thane, or, as Miss Joanna Baillie would have it, according to the distinction indicated in the line, "the *thanies* drinking in the hall," the thanie—that is, the lesser Thane of Cauldshouthers, in the shire of Peebles. True, there was in that county, properly only one thane, viz., he of Drumelzier, whose castle, now in ruins, may still be seen near Powsail; but of the lesser order there were many; and, if any gutter-blooded burgher of Linton had, in his cups at Cantswalls, alleged anything to the contrary, he might have been set down as a leveller. The property of Cauldshouthers was of that kind comprehending a mixture of bog, mire, and moss, which is indicated by its name. Indeed, almost all the estates in that shire bore names no less appropriate; and, though some proprietors, such as Montgomerie, Veitch, Keith, and Kennedy, have endeavoured to impart a gentility to their possessions by rechristening them, they did so, we shrewdly suspect, to conceal the fact that they were new comers, and not of the noble old Hallmyres, Bogends, Blairbogs, and Cauldcoats. Not so, however, Gilbert Geddes, for the laird was of the good ancient stock of Cauldshouthers, and gloried in the name as he did in the old blood that had come down through honourable veins, unadulterated and unobstructed—save



probably by a partial congelation, the effect of the cold barren lands—until it landed, with an accumulation of dignity, in his own arteries, and those of his sister, Miss Grizelda.

Nothing in the world could have been more natural than that one of so old a family should endeavour to keep up the stock by marriage; yet it was true, and as lamentable as true, that Mr. Gilbert had not been able—though the fiftieth summer had shone on Cauldshouthers since he was born in the old house—to get matters so arranged as to place himself within the noose in a manner befitting his dignity. Somehow or another, the other proprietors around, such as Bogend and Glenmuck, pretended to discover that their blood was thicker than that of the Geddeses, and not a scion of their stocks would they allow to be engrafted on the good old oak of Cauldshouthers. It is, however, an old saying, that fortune favours the brave in marriage as in war, and the adage seemed fair to be realized, for, one day, the laird came from Linton a walking omen of prospective success, and the very first words he said to his sister Grizelda boded good.

“Ken ye the dame Shirley, wha lives at the east end o’ Linton?” said he, as he sat down on the big oak chair in the mansion of Cauldshouthers.

“Better than you do, Gilbert,” rejoined the sister. “Her maiden name is Bertram; but wha her husband was is no easy tauld. They say he was a captain in England, but I canna say she has ony o’ the dignity o’ a captain’s widow. Report says naething in her favour, unless it be that she’s a descendant o’ the Bertrams o’ Duckpool.”

“Ah, Grizel!” ejaculated Gilbert, “if ye could mak out that pedigree, a’ her fauts would be easily covered, especially with the help of the five thousand she has got left her by a cotton-spinner in St. Mungo’s. Ye maun try and



mak out the pedigree, Grizel. Set about it, woman; mair depends on't than ye wot."

"What depends on't?" replied the sister.

"Maybe the junction o' the twa ancient families," rejoined he.

"Are ye serious, brother?" said Grizel, as she stroked down her boddice, and sat as upright as the dignity of the family of Cauldshouthers required.

"Indeed am I," rejoined the laird. "I want to be about with Bogend and Glenmuck, who refused me their dochters. Ken ye the antiquity o' the Bertrams?"

"Brawly," was the reply of the stiff Grizelda. "They count as far back as the fifth James, who, passing through Tweeddale, was determined to pay nae court to the Thane of Drumelzier; and yet he couldna mak his way—in a country where hill rides upon hill, and moss joins moss, frae Tweedscross to the Cauldstane-slap—without some assistance, the mair by note that he stuck in the mire, and might have been there yet, had it no been for Jock Bertram, a hind, who got the royal traveller and his men out, and led them through the thane's lands, to Glenwhappen. John got the mire whar the king stuck, which was called Duckpool, as a free gift to him and his heirs. But we o' Cauldshouthers are aulder, I ween, than even that, and we maun keep up our dignity."

"So we maun, Grizel; but you've forgot the best part o' the story, how the Thane o' Drumelzier having heard that a stranger had passed through his lands without paying him homage, rode with his men, mounted on white horses, after the rebels, and cam up with them just as the king was carousing after his journey. The thane, I wot, was sune on his knees. But we're aff the pin o' the wheel, Girz. The question is, could the family o' Geddes o' Cauldshouthers stand the shock o' a marriage wi' a doubtfu' descendant o' Jock Bertram, with five thousand in her pouch?"



"We're sae *very, very* ancient, ye see Gib," replied the sister, as she looked meditatively, and twirled her two thumbs at the end of her rigid arms. "Indeed, we're a'thegither lost in mist, and, for aught we ken, we may be as auld as the Hunters o' Polmood, wha got a grant o' the twa Hopes frae Malcolm Canmore. Duckpool is a mere bairn to Cauldshouthers, and this woman mayna be a real Bertram after a'. There were English Bertrams, ye ken—Bertram the Archer was o' them, and he followed the trade o' robbery."

"And what auld honourable family about the Borders ever got their lands in ony other way, Girz!" replied the brother.

"Nane, of course," rejoined Grizel; "but maybe Mrs. Shirley comes frae the real Bertrams, and five thousand might be laid out in draining the lands. Nae doubt she wad jump at ye, Gib!"

"That makes me laugh, Girz!" rejoined the brother. "The legatee o' a cotton-spinner jump at the Laird o' Cauldshouthers! Ay, if he wad stoop to let her—that's the question, sister; and there's nae other, for I was wi' the dame this very day, within an hour after Rory Flayem, the Linton writer, gave me the hint o' her gude fortune. I cam on her wi' a' the force o' the dignity o' our family, and the very name o' our lands made her shiver in tory veneration. She was thunderstruck at the honour."

"I dinna wonder at that," replied Grizel. "I mysel hae aften wondered at the ancientness o' our house, and pity the silly fools wha change the names o' their properties. Ha, ha! I fancy if the Duke o' Argyle had been ane o' the auld Blairbogs, he wadna hae changed the name o' their auld inheritance to that o' 'The Whim.'"

"Na, faith he, Girz!"

"And, by my troth," continued the sister, "I think the guidwife o' Middlebie, wha bade us change Cauld-



shouthers to Blinkbonny, was a wee envious, and deserved a catechising for her pains."

"There's nae doubt o't," added the brother. "But we're aff the wire again, Girz. Is it really your honest opinion that our honour would stand the shock o' the connection wi' the Widow Shirley?"

"The Emperor o' Muscovy," replied the sister, with a toss of her head, "didna lose a jot o' his greatness by marrying the cottager. The eagles o' Glenholme stoop to pick up the stanechaffers and fatten on them; and, really, I think, a'thing considered, that Cauldshouthers might, without a bend o' the back, bear up a burgher."

"The practice is, at least, justified by the aristocracy," added Gilbert; "and, ye ken, that's enough for *us*. It wad tak a guid drap o' burgher bluid, and mair, I wot, if there's ony o' the Duckpool sap in't, to thin that o' the Geddeses."

"And even if our honour was a wee thing damaged," rejoined the sister, "that might be made up by our lands being changed frae bog to arable, though, I believe, the bog, after a', is the auldest soil o' the country. Even the sad fate o' Nichol Muschet didna a'thegither destroy the respectability o' the Bogha's. There's great ancientness in bogs, yet as there's a kind o' fashion now-a-days about arable, I wadna be against the change to a certain limited extent. Ye hae now my opinion on this important subject, Gilbert, and may act according to the dictates o' the high spirit o' our auld race."

The door opened, and Rory Flayem entered.

"Weel, hae ye made the inquiry?" said the laird. "Has Mrs. Shirley really got a legacy o' the five thousand?"

"I have seen the cotton-spinner's will!" replied the writer, "and there can be nae doubt of the legacy."

Why more?—Next day the spruce laird was rapping at the door of the widow heiress. He entered with the



cool dignity of his caste ; and might have come out under the influence of the same cool prudence, had not his honourable blood been fired by the presence of one of those worthies already hinted at—a Linton laird—who could have been about nothing else in the world than trying to get a lift from off the poor's box, by the assistance of the Widow Shirley.

“Your servant, sir,” said the Linton portioner ; “I did not think you had been acquainted here. Ane might rather hae expected to hae seen you about Bogend or Glenmuck, where there are still some braw leddies to dispose of.”

The remark was impertinent, doubtless, and horribly ill-timed, because Cauldshouthers had been rejected by Bogend, and he was here a suitor competing with one who desecrated the term he gloried in, and whom, along with the whole class of Linton lairds, he hated mortally ; and he had a good right to hate them, for some of them, with no more than ten pounds a-year, were still heritors, and not only heritors, but ancient heritors, not much less ancient than the Geddeses themselves, so that they were a species of mock aristocrats, coming yet so near the real ones in the very attributes which the latter arrogated to themselves, that it required an effort of the mind to distinguish the real from the false. But Mr. Gilbert admitted of no such dubiety, and marked the difference decidedly and effectually. He did not return the Linton aristocrat an answer, but, drawing himself up, turned to the window as if to survey his competitor's estate, which consisted of a rood or two of arable land, and to wait till the latter took his hat. The Linton aristocrat very soon left the room ; and however unimportant this slight event may appear, it was in fact decisive of the higher aristocrat's fate, for the blood of the Geddeses was up, and the heat of tory blood is a condition of the precious fluid not to be laughed at.

“Ye'll hae nae want o' thae sma' heritor creatures after



ye, dame," said he, as he condescended to sit down by the blushing widow.

"Yes," answered she, with great simplicity. "Fortune, Mr. Geddes, brings friends, or, at least, would-be friends, and one who has few relations requires to be on her guard."

"It is everything in thae matters," said the proprietor, "to look to respectability and station. Thae Linton bodies ca' themselves lairds, because they are proprietors o' about as muckle ground as would mak guid roomy graves to them. A real laird is something very different. And it's a pity when it becomes necessary that *we* should shew them the difference."

"Ah, you are of an ancient and honourable family, Mr. Geddes," said the widow. "Cauldshouthers is a name as familiar to me as Oliver Castle, or Drochel, or Neidpath, or Drumelzier."

"I see ye hae a proper estimate o' the degrees o' dignity, dame," said he; "and, doubtless, ye'll mak the better use o' the fortune that has been left ye; but I could expect naething less frae ane o' the Duckpools. I'm thinking ye're o' the right Bertrams."

"Yes," replied she; "and then my husband was descended from the Shirleys, Earl Ferrars, and Baron Ferrars of Chartley. His arms were the same as the Beauchamps, at least he used to say so. What are your's, Mr. Geddes?"

"Maybe ye dinna ken heraldry, dame!" replied the laird. "Our arms are vert, *three peat hags*, argent—the maist ancient o' the bearings in Tweeddale; as, indeed, may be evinced frae the description—peat land being clearly the original soil. Would it no be lamentable to think that sae ancient a family should end in my person."

"It is in your own power to prevent that, Mr. Geddes!" answered she.



"Say rather in your power, dame Shirley!" rejoined he, determined to cut out the Linton heritor by one bold stroke.

"O Mr. Geddes!" sighed the widow, holding her head at the proper angle of *naïveté*.

"Nae wonder that she's owrepowered by the honour," muttered the suitor, as he took breath to finish what he had so resolutely begun. "I am serious, madam," he continued. "To be plain wi' ye, and come to the point at ance, I want a mistress to Cauldshouthers; and you are the individual wham I hae selected to do the honours o' that important situation."

"Oh—O Mr. Geddes!" again cried the dame. "You have *such* a winning way of wooing!"

"I fancy there canna be the slightest breath o' objection," again said he, in his consciousness of having ennobled her in an instant by the mere hint of the honour.

"She would be a bold woman, besides a fool, that would reject so good an offer," replied she, burying her face in a napkin.

"That she would," rejoined Gilbert—"baith bauld and an idiot; and now, since ye hae received the honour wi' suitable modesty and gratitude, there is just ae condition that I wad like satisfied; and that is, that ye wad do your best to support the dignity o' the station to which you are to be elevated. Your ain pedigree, ye see, is at best but a dubious concern; and, therefore, it will require a' your efforts to comport yoursel in such a way as to accord suitably wi' the forms and punctilios o' aristocracy. It is just as weel, by the by, that ye hae few relatives; because, while the honour o' our ancient house may retain its character, in spite o' a match maybe in nae sma' degree below it, it might become a very different affair in the case o' a multitude o' puir beggarly relations."

"I am nearly the last of my race, Mr. Geddes," replied



she. "Is it not strange that we should be so very like each other?"

"Ay, in *that* particular respect," added the laird, as a salvo of their inequality.

And, after some farther concerted arrangements, the heritor left his affianced, and proceeded to Cauldshouthers, to report to Grizelda what he had achieved. In a short time, accordingly, the marriage was solemnized; and a very suitable display was made in the mansion of Cauldshouthers, where there were invited many of the neighbouring aristocrats. There were the Bogends, and the Hallmyres, and the Glenmucks, and others, some of whom, though they had asserted a superiority over the Geddeses, and turned up their noses at the match with a burgher widow with five thousand pounds, made by the vulgar operation of cotton-spinning, yet could not refuse the boon of their presence at the wedding of one of their own sect of exclusives. Miss Grizelda acted as mistress of the ceremonies, and contrived, by proper training, to make the bride go through the aristocratic drill with much eclat. She had correct opinions, as well as good practice, in this department. It is only the degenerate modern town-elite, among the exclusives, who pretend that *easiness* of manners—meaning thereby the total absence of all dignified *stiffness*—is the true test of aristocratic breeding. The older and truer stock of the country—such as the Geddeses—despise this beggarly town-born maxim: with them nothing can be too stiff; buckram-attitudes and dresses are the very staple of their calling. And why not? Any graceful snab or snip, of good spirits, when freed from the stool or board, may be as free and frisky as a kitten; but to carry out a legitimate and consistent stiffness of the godlike machine with an according costiveness of speech and loftiness of sentiment, can belong only to those who have been born great; and so, to be sure, these were the maxims on which



Grizelda acted in qualifying the bride to appear in a becoming manner before the Tweeddale grandees. Everything went off well. The dame was given out as a Duckpool; and it must have been fairly admitted, even by the proud Bogends, that she could not have acted her part better though she had been in reality descended from that house, so favoured by the fifth James, at the very time that he brought Drumelzier to his knees at Glenwhappen.

And it may thus be augured, that the Thane of Cauldshouthers was satisfied. The manners imparted to Mrs. Geddes by the sister, seemed to adhere to her; and though the Glenmucks alleged that her dignified rigidity was nothing but burgher awkwardness, it was not believed by those who knew that gentle blood hath in it some seeds of spleen.

"She performs her pairt wi' native dignity," was Gilbert's opinion expressed to his sister; "and seems to feel as if she had been born to sustain the important character she has to play, as the wife o' ane o' the auldest heritors o' Tweeddale. But ye maun keep at her, Girz; and, while you are improving her, I'll be busy with the bogs. We'll mak a' arable that will be arable."

And straightway, accordingly, he set about disposing of a part of his wife's tocher, in planting, and draining, and hedging, and ditching, with a view to impart some heat to Cauldshouthers, in return for the warmth which the fleeces of coarse wool had yielded to him and others. Meanwhile, the training within doors went on. Tea-parties were good discipline; and at one of these, the mistress of Bogend and her two daughters, and the mistress of Hallmyre and her daughter and nephew, and a number of others, witnessed the improvement of their new married neighbour. Pedigrees were always the favourite topic at Cauldshouthers.

"I maun hae Mrs Geddes's reduced to paper," said the



laird, "for the satisfaction o' ye a'. I like a tree—there's a certainty about it that defies a' envy. There's few o' us, I wot, that can count sae far back as the Bertrams."

"Mrs. Geddes might tell us off hand," said the mistress of Bogend, piqued of course. "I could gie the Bogends from the first to the last."

"And I hae a' the Ha'myres on my tongue's end," said she of that old family.

"And I could gie the Geddeses, stock and stem," added Grizelda.

"But it doesna follow that Mrs. Geddes has just the same extent o' memory," said the laird, as a cover to his half-marrow.

"Indeed, my memory is very poor on family descents," said the wife; "and there is now none of our family left to assist my recollections."

"Ah, Janet," cried a voice from the door, which had opened in the meantime and let in a stout huckster-looking dame and two children. "I am right glad to see you sae weel settled," she continued, as she bustled forward and seized the mistress of the house by the hand. "But it wasna friendly, it wasna like a sister, woman, no to write and tell me o' yer marriage. Heigh! but I am tired after that lang ride frae Glasgow. Sit down, childer; it's yer aunty's house, and, by my faith, it's nae sma affair; but oh, it has an awfu name."

The speaker had it all to herself, save for a whisper from the lady of Bogend, who asked her of Hallmyres if this would be another of the Duckpools. The others were dumb from amazement; and the new-comer gloried in the silence.

"Wasna that a lucky affair—that siller left us by the cotton spinner?" she rattled forth with increasing volubility. "Be quiet, childer. Faith, lass, if we hadna got our legacy just in the nick as it were, our John, wha was only makin



six shillings a week at the heckling, wad hae gi'en up the ghaist a'thegither."

The laird was getting fidgetty, and looked round for the servant; Grizelda was still dumb; the Bogends and Hallmyres were all curiosity; and Mrs. Geddes looked as if she could not help it. All was still an open field for the speaker.

"But, dear me, lass," again cried the visiter, "we never heard o' Serjeant Shirley's death."

"If ye're ony friend o' Mrs. Geddes's," said the laird, recovering himself, "you had better step ben to the parlour, and she'll see you there."

"Ou, I'm brawly where I am, sir," replied she of St. Mungo's. "There's nae use for ceremony wi' friends. Ye'll be Janet's husband, I fancy? Keep aff the back o' yer uncle's chair, ye ill-mannered brat."

"There is a woman in the parlour wishes to see you, Mrs. Geddes," said the servant.

"What like is she?" cried the Glasgow friend. "Is she a weel-faured woman, wi' a bairn at her foot?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"Just bring her in here, then," continued the speaker. "It's our sister Betty. I asked her to meet me here the day, and she was to get a cast o' a cart as far as Linton. She was to hae brocht Saunders wi' her, but there's some great folk dead about Lithgow, and he's been sae thrang wi' their mournings that I fancy he couldna win."

"Are these your sisters, Mrs. Geddes?" said the lady of Bogend, who probably enjoyed secretly the perplexity around her.

"I can answer for mysel," replied the visitor; "and whether this be Betty or no, I'll soon tell ye;" and she rose to waddle to the door to satisfy the inquiry of the lady of Bogend. "The truth is, madam," she said, by



way of favoured intelligence, as she passed the chair of the latter, "we're a' sisters; but, if we had been on the richt side o' the blanket—ye ken what I mean, if our faither and mither had been married—the siller left us by our uncle the cotton-spinner wad hae been twice as muckle. Is that you, Betty?" she bawled at the door. "Come in, woman."

"Save us!—save us!—the honour o' the Geddeses is gane for ever," groaned Gilbert.

"It's just me, Peggy," responded another voice from the passage; and the heavy tread of a weary traveller, mixed with the cries of a child, announced an approach. The two entered. The woman was dressed like the wife of a man of her husband's profession, who had got a recent legacy.

"Saunders is coming, after a'," cried Betty, as she entered. "He got done with the mournings on Wednesday. He's in the public-house, alang the road there, taking a dram wi' a friend, and will be here immediately. John, I fancy, couldna win. Ye're weel set doon, Janet," she continued, as she stood and stared at the room, turning round and round. "My troth, lass, ye hae fa'n on yer feet at last. It was just as weel the sergeant de'ed. Sit ye there, Geordie, and see if ye can learn manners enough to haud yer tongue."

The little cousins, Geordie, Johnny, and Jessie, entered instantly into a clattering of friendly recognizances; and the two mothers bustled forward to chairs alongside of their sister, the lady of the house, whose colour had come and gone twenty times, and all power of speech had been taken away from her by a discovery as sudden as it was unpleasant. Yet what was to be done? Was the aristocratic Grizelda to sit and see tea filled out for the wives and weans of a dresser of yarns, and an artificer of garments? Was the honour of the Geddeses of Cauldshouthers to be scuttled



by a needle and a hackle-tooth? But matters were not destined to remain even upon the poise of these pivots. The little nephew of Hallmyres, annoyed by the burgher-bairns, struck one of them a blow in the face, which the spruce scion of the Lithgow tailor returned with far more gallantry than might have been expected from one of his degenerate caste. The cousin Johnny took the part of his relative; and matters were fast progressing towards hostilities, when the lady of Hallmyres rose to quell the incipient affair.

“Aff hands, my woman,” cried Peggy, suddenly leaving her chair.

“Ay, ay,” added Betty, “we hae at least a right to civility in the house o’ our sister. We come kindly and friendly, as may be seen frae what’s in my bundle—a gude bacon ham, and a gude cassimir waistcoat, sewed by Saunders’ ain hands, for the guidman o’ Cauldshouthers, and a’ we want is something like friendliness in return. Just let the bairns alane. They’ll gree fine when better acquaint.”

“Mrs. Geddes,” said Grizelda, with a puckered face and a starched manner, “ye’ll better tak yer friends ben the house.”

“Awa wi’ them!” added the laird. “We maun hae a reckoning about a’ this.”

“There’s no the sma’est occasion for’t,” responded Betty. “The bairns will agree fine. Just let them play themselves while we’re taking our tea. Saunders will be here immediately.”

“A guid advice,” added Peggy; “but wha are our friends, Janet? Canna ye speak, woman? This will be Mr. Geddes, my brither-in-law, I fancy; and this will be Girzie, my gude-sister; but as for the ithers, I ken nae mair about them than I do o’ the brothers and sisters o’ the sergeant, wham I never saw.”



“And here comes Saunders, at last,” cried Betty, rising, and running to the window. “I will gang and let him in.”

Bustling to the door, she executed her purpose, and straightway appeared again, ushering in, with a face that told her pride in her husband, a Crispinite, wonderfully *bien fait*, dressed in a suit of glossy black, clean shaven, and as pale as any sprig of nobility.

“Mr. Geddes, I presume,” said he, rubbing his hands, which retained the marks of the needle, if not the dye of the mournings.

“Here’s a chair for ye, Saunders,” cried Betty. “Ye’ll no be caring for tea, after the gill ye had wi’ yer auld foreman, at the sign o’ the ‘Harrow,’ yonder. Had ye ony mair after I left ye? I’m no sure about yer e’e. There’s mair glamour in’t than there should be. Sit ye down, and I’ll bring the bundle with the ham and the waistcoat.”

Grizelda held up her hands in amazement.

“For the love o’ heaven, leave us, good leddies,” she said to her friends.

“Oh ay,” added the laird, “leave us, leave us, for mercy’s sake.”

“You have got into a duckpool,” whispered the lady of Hallmyres, as she rose, followed by the others; “and I wish you fair out of it. Good by—good by.”



## BON GUALTIER'S TALES.

## COUNTRY QUARTERS.

A PLEASANTER little town than Potterwell does not exist in that part of her Majesty's dominions called Scotland. On one side, the hand of cultivation has covered a genial soil with richness and fertility. The stately mansion, "bosomed high in tufted trees," occasionally invites the eye, as it wanders over the landscape; while here and there, the river Wimpledown may be seen peeping out amid the luxuriant verdure of wood and plain, and seeming to concentrate on itself all the radiance of any little sunshine that may be going. On the other side, again, are nothing but impracticable mountains—fine bluff old fellows—that evidently have an extensive and invincible contempt for Time, and, like other great ones of the earth, never carry any *change* about them. Look beyond these, and the prospect is indeed a fine one—a little monotonous, perhaps, but still a fine one—peak receding behind peak in endless series, a multitudinous sea of mountain tops, with noses as blue as a disappointed man's face, or Miss Harriet Martineau's stockings.

With a situation presenting such allurements for the devotees of the picturesque, is it wonderful that Potterwell became a favourite resort? By the best of good fortune, too, a spring, close by, of a peculiarly nauseous character, had, a few years before the period we write of, attracted attention by throwing into violent convulsions sundry cows that had been so far left to themselves as to drink of it,



besides carrying off an occasional little boy or so, as a sort of just retribution for so far suppressing his natural tastes as to admit it within his lips. Dr. Scammony, however, had taken the mineral water under his patronage; and his celebrated pamphlet upon the medicinal properties of the Potterwell Mephitic Assafœtida Waters at once fixed their reputation, while it materially augmented his own. A general subscription was projected, with a view to the erection of a pump-room. The plan took amazingly; and, from being left to work its way out, as best it might, through the diseased and miserable weeds with which it was overgrown, the spring all at once found itself established in a handsome apartment, fitted up with a most benevolent attention to the wants of such persons as might repair thither with the probable chance—however little they might be conscious of the fact—of dying by a watery death.

It was a bright sparkling morning in August, and there was an exhilarating freshness in the air, that caused the heart to leap up, and make the spirit as unclouded as the blue sky overhead. The pump-room was thronged, and every one congratulated his neighbour on the beauty of the morning.

“At your post as usual, Stukeley!” said a smartly-dressed young man, stepping up to Mr. Stukeley—a well-known frequenter of the wells since their first celebrity—and shaking him warmly by the hand. “I do believe you are retained as a check upon the pump woman, that you keep such a strict look out after her customers. How many doses has she administered to-day? Come now, out with your note-book, and let me see.”

“Oh, my dear Frank, if you really want to know, I am the man for you—Old Cotton of Dundee, four and a-half, and his daughter took off the balance of the six. What do you think I heard him whisper to her?—‘Hoot, lassie,



tak it aff, it's a' paid for;' and she, poor soul, was forced to gulp it down, that he might have the satisfaction of knowing that full value had been given for his penny. Then there was Runrig the farmer from Mid-Lothian, half-a-dozen; the man has a frame of iron, and a cheek as fresh as new-mown hay; but somebody had told him the water would do him good, and he has accordingly taken enough to make him ill for a fortnight. Then, there was Deacon Dobie's rich widow—fat, fair, and forty—she got pretty well through the seventh tumbler; but, it's a way with her, when she begins drinking, not to know when to stop; which, by the way, may account for her having been, for some time, as she elegantly expresses it, 'gey an nervish ways, whiles.' After her came"—And Stukeley was going on to enumerate the different visitors of the morning, checking them off upon his fingers as he proceeded, when his friend, Frank Preston, stopped him.

"For Heaven's sake, have done; and tell me, if you can, who those two fops of fellows are at the foot of the room? They only came a week ago; and, though nobody knows who they are, they have made the acquaintance of half the people here."

"I see nothing very odd in that. I know nothing of the men; but they dress well, and are moderately good-looking, and have just sufficient assurance to pass off upon the uninitiated for ease of manner and fashionable breeding. A pair of parvenus, no doubt; but what is your motive for asking so particularly about them?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing! Only, I am to meet them at the Cheeshams to-night, and I wished to know something of them."

"So, so! sets the wind in that quarter? A rival, Master Frank? It is there the shoe pinches, is it?"

"A rival—nonsense! What should I care whether the puppies are attentive to Emily Cheesham or not?"



"Why more to her than to her sister Fanny? I mentioned no names. Ha! Master Frank, you see I have caught you. Come, come, tell me what it is annoys you?"

"Well," stammered out Frank Preston,—“well, the fact is—the fact is, one of them has been rather particular in his attentions to Emily, and I am half-inclined to think she gives him encouragement.”

"And, suppose she does, I see nothing in that but the harmless vanity of a girl, pleased to have another dangler under her spell."

"That is all very well, but I don't like it a bit. It may be so, and it may not. Her encouragement to him is very marked, and I don't feel easy under it at all, I don't."

"Why, Frank, you must both have a very poor opinion of Miss Emily, and be especially soft yourself, to give yourself any concern in the matter. If you have deemed her worthy of your regards, and she has given you warrant for thinking you have a claim upon them, and yet she now throws you off to make way for this newer lover, your course is a clear one. Turn from her at once, and fortify yourself with old Withers' lines—

‘If she be not made for me  
What care I for whom she be.’”

"Excellent philosophy, if one could but act upon it. But what annoys me about the business is, that I am sure these fellows are a pair of snobs, and are playing themselves off for something greater than they are."

"Very possibly; but that is just a stronger reason for taking my advice. If Miss Emily can be gratified with the attentions of such persons, leave her to the full enjoyment of them. Don't make yourself miserable for her folly."

"Oh, I don't make myself miserable at all, not in the least; only, I should like to find out who the fellows are."



The young men, of whom Preston and Stukeley had been speaking, and who now lounged up the room, describing semicircles with their legs at every step they took, were certainly never meant for the ordinary tear and wear of the hard-working every-day world. Their dress had too fine a gloss upon it for that, their hair much too gracefully disposed. They were both rather below the middle size, both dark in the complexion, but one of them much more so than the other. The darker slip of humanity had cultivated the growth of his hair with singular success. It fell away in masses from his forehead and temples, and curled, like the rings of the young vine, over the velvet collar that capped a coat of symmetrical proportions. Circling round the cheeks, and below the chin, it somewhat obtruded upon the space which is generally occupied by the face, so that his head might truly be said to be a mass of hair, slightly interspersed with features. His friend, again, to avoid monotony, had varied the style of his upper works, and his locks were allowed to droop in long, lanky, melancholy tangles down his sallow cheeks; while, perched upon either lip, might be seen a feathery-looking object, not to be accounted for, but on the supposition that it was intended to seduce the public into a belief of its being a moustache. Both were showily dressed. Both had stocks terminating in a cataract of satin that emptied itself into tartan velvet waistcoats, worn probably in honour of the country; both had gold chains innumerable, twisting in a multiplicity of convolutions across these waistcoats; both had on yellow kid gloves of unimpeachable purity, and both carried minute canes of imitation ebony, with which, at intervals, they flogged, one the right and the other the left leg, with the most painful ferocity. They were a noble pair; alike, yet, oh, how different!

“Eugene, my boy,” said the darker of the two, in a tone of voice loud enough to let half the room hear the interest-



ing communication, "we must see what sort of stuff this here water is—we must, positively."

"Roost eggs, Adolph, whisked in bilge-water, with a rusty tenpenny nail. Faugh! I'm smashed if I taste it."

"Not so bad that for you," returned Adolph, smiling faintly; "but you must really pay your respects to the waters."

"'Pon my soul, I shawn't. I had enough of that so't of thing in Jummany, the time I was ova with Ned Hoxham."

"That was the time, wasn't it, that you brought me over that choice lot of cigaws?"

"I believe it was," responded Eugene, with the most impressive indifference, as if he wished it to be understood that he had been so often there that he could not recall the particulars of any one visit.

"I know something of Seidlitz and Seltzer myself," resumed the darker Adonis, "and Soda water too, by Jove, for that matter, and they're not bad things either, when one's been making a night of it, so I'll have a try at this Potterwell fluid, and see how it does for a change."

In this manner the two friends proceeded, to the infinite enlightenment of those about them, who, being greatly struck with their easy and facetious manners, stood admiringly by with looks of evident delight! The young men saw the impression they were making, and, desirous of keeping it up, went on to ask the priestess of the spring, how often, and in what quantities she found it necessary to doctor it with Glauber salts, brimstone, and assafoetida. The joke took immensely. Such of the bystanders as could laugh—for the internal agitation produced by the cathartic properties of their morning draught, made that a somewhat difficult and dangerous experiment—did so; and various young men, of no very definite character, but who seemed to support the disguise of gentlemen with considerable pain



to themselves, sidled up, and endeavoured to strike into conversation with our Nisus and Euryalus, thinking to share by contact the glory which they had won. All they got for their pains, however, was a stare of cool indifference. The friends were as great adepts in the art and mystery of *cutting*, as the most fashionable tailor could be; and, after volunteering a few ineffectual efforts at sprightliness, these awkward aspirants to fame were forced to fall back, abashed and crest-fallen, into the natural insignificance of their character.

These proceedings did not pass unnoticed by Preston and his elderly friend, who made their own observations upon them, but were prevented from saying anything on the subject to each other by the entrance of a party, which diverted their attention in a different direction. These were no other than Mrs. Cheesham and her two accomplished daughters, Miss Emily and Miss Fanny Cheesham. Mrs. Cheesham's personal appearance may be passed over very briefly; as no one, so far as is known, ever cared about it but herself. She was vain, vulgar, and affected; fond of finery and display; and the one dominant passion of her life was to insinuate herself and her family into fashionable society, and secure a brilliant match for her daughters. They, again, were a pair of attractive showy girls; Emily flippant, sparkling, lively; Fanny, demure, reserved, and cold. Emily's eyes were dark and lustrous—you saw the best of them at once; and her look, alert and wicked. These corresponded well with a well-rounded figure, a rosy complexion, and full pouting lips, that were "ruddier than the cherry." Fanny was tall and "stately in her going;" pale, but without that look of sickliness which generally accompanies such a complexion, and her eyes, beautiful as they were when brought into play, were generally shrouded by the drooping of her eyelids, like those of one who is accustomed to be frequently self-inwrapt. With Emily



you might sport in jest and raillery by the hour; but with Fanny you always felt, as it were, bound to be upon your best behaviour. They passed up the room, distributing nods of recognition, and occasionally stopping to allow Mrs. Cheesham to give her invitations to a *soirée musicale* which she intended to get up that evening.

“Your servant, ladies,” said old Stukeley, raising his hat, while his friend followed his example. “You are late. I was afraid we were not to have the pleasure of seeing you this morning. Pray, Miss Emily, what new novel or poem was it that kept you awake so late last night that you have lost half this glorious morning? Tell me the author’s name, that I may punish the delinquent, by cutting up his book, in the next number of our review?”

“Cut it up, and you will do more than I could; for I found myself nodding over the second page, and I feel the drowsiness about me still.”

“The opiate—the opiate, Miss Emily? Who was its compounder? He must be a charmer indeed.”

“Himself and his printer knows. Only some unhappy bard, who dubs us women ‘The angels of life,’ and misuses us vilely through a dozen cantos of halting verse. The poor man has forgot the story

‘Of man’s first disobedience, and the fruit  
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste  
Brought death into the world and all our woe,’

or he would have christened us daughters of Eve by a very different name.”

“O you little rogue! you are too hard upon this devotee to your dear deluding sex. It is only his excess of politeness that has made him forget his historical reading.”

“His politeness! Fiddlestick! I would as soon have a troop of boys inflict the intolerable tediousness of their calf-love upon me as endure the rhapsodies of a booby,



who strips us of our good flesh and blood, frailties and all, to etherealize us into an incomprehensible compound of tears, sighs, moonshine, music, love, flowers, and hysterics."

"Emily, how you run on!" broke in Mrs. Cheesham. "My dear Mr. Stukeley, really you must not encourage the girl in her nonsense. I declare, I sometimes think her tongue runs away with her wits."

"Better that, I'm sure, madam, than have it run away without them," responded Stukeley, in a deprecating tone, which threw Mrs. Cheesham, whose intellect was none of the acutest, completely out.

"Girls, there are Mr. Blowze and Mr. Lilylipz," said Mrs. Cheesham, looking in the direction of the friends, Adolph and Eugene; "you had better arrange with them about coming this evening."

Emily advanced, with her sister, to the engaging pair, who received them with that peculiar contortion of the body, between a jerk and a shuffle, which young men are in the habit of mistaking for a bow, and was soon deep in the heart of a flirtation with Adolph, while Fanny stood listening to the vapid nothings of Eugene, a very model of passive endurance. Frank Preston was anything but an easy spectator of this movement; nor was Emily blind to this; but, like a wilful woman, she could not forbear playing the petty tyrant, and exercising freely the power to torment which she saw that she possessed.

"You will be of our party to-night, gentlemen," continued Mrs. Cheesham. "We are to have a little music. You are fond of music, Mr. Stukeley, I know; and no pressing can be necessary to an *amatoor* like you, Mr. Francis. I can assure you, you'll meet some very nice people. Mr. and Mrs. M'Skrattachan, highly respectable people—an old Highland family, and with very high connections. Mr. M'Skrattachan's mother's sister's aunt—no, his aunt's mother's sister—yes, that was it—Mr.



M'Skrattachan's aunt's mother's sister; and yet I don't know—I dare say I was right before—at all events, it was one or other of them—married a second cousin—something of that kind—of the Duke of Argyle, by the mother's side. They had a large estate in Skye or Ross-shire—I am not sure which, but it was somewhere thereabout."

Stukeley and Preston were glad to cover their retreat by acceptance of Mrs. Cheesham's invitation; and, leaving her to empty the dregs of the details which she had begun into the willing ears of some of her more submissive friends, they made their escape from the pumproom.

Slopbole Cottage, where the Cheesham's were domiciliated during their sojourn at Potterwell, was situated upon the banks of the Wimpledown, at a distance of somewhat less than a quarter of a mile from the burgh. It had, at one time, been a farm-house; but, within a few years, it had been recast: and, by the addition of a bow window, a trellised door, and a few of the usual *et ceteras*, it had been converted into what is by courtesy termed a cottage ornée. It was an agreeable place, for all that, shaded by the remnants of a fine old wood—the rustling of whose foliage made pleasant music, as it blended with the ever-sounding splash and rushing of the stream.

When Frank Preston arrived at Slopbole Cottage that evening, he found the drawing-room already well stocked with the usual components of a tea-party. The two exquisites of the morning he saw, to his dismay, were already there. Adolph was assiduously sacrificing to the charms and wit of Miss Emily, while his shadow, Eugene, was—but Preston did not care about that—as much engaged in Macadamising his great conceptions into small talk suitable for the intellectual capacity of Miss Fanny. Mrs. Cheesham regarded these proceedings with entire satisfaction. The friends, to her mind, were men of birth, fashion, and fortune, and the very men for her daughters. Besides, there



was a mystery about them that was charming. Nobody knew exactly who they were, although everybody was sure they were somebody. None but great people ever travel *incog*. They were evidently struck by her daughters. Things were in a fair train; and, if she could but make a match of it, Mrs. Cheesham thought she might then fold her hands across, and make herself easy for life. Her daughters would be the wives of great men, and she was their mother, and every one knows what an important personage a wife's mother is.

"Two very fine young men, Mr. Francis," said Mrs. Cheesham. "Extremely intelligent people. And so good looking! Quite *distingue*, too. It is not every day one meets such people."

Frank Preston threw in the necessary quantity of "yes's," "certainly's," and so forth, while Mrs. Cheesham continued—

"They seem rather taken with my girls, don't they? Mr. Blowze is never away from Emily's side. His attentions are quite marked. Don't you think, now, they'd make a nice pair? They're both so lively—always saying such clever things. I never knew Emily so smart either; but that girl's all animation—all spirits. I always said Emily would never do but for a rattle of a husband—a man that could talk as much as herself. It does not do, you know, really it does not do for the wife to have too much of the talk to herself. I make that a principle; and, as I often tell Cheesham, I let him have it all his own way, rather than argue a point with him."

This was, of course, an exceedingly agreeable strain of conversation to the lover, to whom it was no small relief, when Mrs. Cheesham quitted his side to single out her musical friends for the performance of a quartette. At her summons, these parties were seen to emerge from the various recesses where they had been concealing themselves,



in all the majesty of silence, as is the way with musical amateurs in general. Miss Fanny, who was really an accomplished performer, was called to preside at the piano-forte, and Mr. Lilylipz rushed before to adjust the music-stool and turn over the leaves for her. Mr. Blewitt got out his flute, and, after screwing it together, commenced a series of blasts upon it, which were considered necessary to the process of tuning. Mr. Harrower, the violoncello player, turned up the wristbands of his coat, placed his handkerchief on his left knee, and, after a preliminary flourish or two of his hands, began to grind his violoncello into a proper sharpness of pitch. Not to be behind the rest, Mr. Fogle screwed his violin strings first up, and then he screwed them down, and then he proceeded to screw them up again, with a waywardness of purpose that might have been extremely diverting, if its effects had not been so very distressing to the ears. Having thus begot a due degree of attention in their audience, the performers thought of trying how the results of their respective preparations tallied.

“Miss Fanny, will you be kind enough to sound your A?” lisped Mr. Blewitt.

Miss Fanny did sound her A, and again a dissonance broke forth that would have thrown Orpheus into fits. It was then discovered that the damp had reduced the piano nearly a whole tone below pitch, and Mr. Blewitt’s flute could not be brought down to a level with it by any contrivance. The musicians, however, were not to be balked in their purpose for this, and they agreed to proceed with the flute some half a tone higher than the other instruments. But there was a world of preliminary work yet to be gone through; tables had to be adjusted, and books had to be built upon music stands. But the tables would not stand conveniently, and the books would fall, and then all the work of adjustment and library architecture had to



be gone over again. At last these matters were put to rights, and, after a few more indefinite vagaries by Messrs. Blewitt, Harrower, and Fogle, the junto made a dash into the heart of one of Haydn's quartetts. The piano kept steadily moving through the piece. Miss Fanny knew her work, and she did it. The others did not know theirs, and they *did for* it. After a few faint squeaks at the beginning, Mr. Blewitt's flute dropped out of hearing altogether, and, just as everybody had set it down as defunct, it began to give token of its existence by a wail or two rising through the storm of sounds with which the performance closed, and then made up its leeway by continuing to vapour away for some time after the rest had finished.

"Bless my heart, are you done?" cried Mr. Blewitt, breaking off in the middle of a solo, which he found himself performing to his own astonishment.

Mr. Harrower and Mr. Fogle threw up their eyes with an intensity of contempt that defies description. To be sure, neither of them had kept either time or tune all the way through. Mr. Harrower's violoncello had growled and groaned, at intervals, in a manner truly pitiable; and Mr. Fogle's bow had done nothing but dance and leap, in a perpetual staccato from the first bar to the last, to the entire confusion of both melody and concord. But they had both managed to be in at the death, and were therefore entitled to sneer at the unhappy flutist. Mr. Eugene Lilylipz, who had annoyed Miss Fanny throughout the performance, by invariably turning over the leaf at the wrong place, now broke into a volley of raptures, of which the words "Devaine" and "Chawming," were among the principal symbols. A buzz of approbation ran round the room, warm in proportion to the relief which the cessation of the Dutch concert afforded. Mr. Harrower and his coadjutors grew communicative, and vented an infinite quantity of the jargon of dilettanteism upon each other,



and upon those about them. They soon got into a discussion upon the merits of different composers, whose names served them to bandy to and fro in the battledore and shuttlecock of conversation. Beethoven was cried up to the seventh heaven by Mr. Harrower, for his grandeur and sublimity, and all that sort of thing.

"There is a Miltonic greatness about the man!" he exclaimed, throwing his eyes to the ceiling, in the contemplation of a visionary demigod. "A vastness, a massiveness, an incomprehensible—eh, eh?—ah, I can't exactly tell what, that places him far above all other writers."

"Every man to his taste," insinuated Mr. Blewitt; "but I certainly like what I can understand best. Now I don't understand Beethoven; but I *can* understand Mozart, or Weber, or Haydn."

"It is very well if you do!" retorted the violoncellist, reflecting probably on the recent specimen Mr. Blewitt had given of his powers. "It is more than everybody does, I can tell you."

"Od, gentlemen, but it's grand music onyhow, and exceeding justice you have done it, if I may speak my mind. But ye ken, I'm no great shakes of a judge."

This was the opinion volunteered by Mr. Cheesham, who saw the musicians were giving symptoms of that tendency to discord for which they are proverbial, and threw out a sop to their vanity, which at once restored them to order. As he said himself, Mr. Cheesham was no great judge of music, nor, indeed, of any of the fine arts. He had read little, and thought less; and yet, since he had become independent of the world, he was fond of assuming an air of knowledge, that was exceedingly amusing. There was nothing, for instance, that he liked better to be talking about than history; and, nevertheless, that Hannibal was killed at the battle of Drumclog, and Julius Cæsar beheaded by Henry the Eighth, were facts which he would



probably have had no hesitation in admitting, upon any reasonable representation.

By this time, Mr. Stukeley had joined the party, and was going his rounds, chatting, laughing, quizzing, and prosing, according to the different characters of the people whom he talked with. When he reached Mr. Cheesham, he found him in earnest conversation with Mr. Lilylipz, regarding the ruins of Tinglebury, an abbey not far from Potterwell, of which the architecture was pronounced, by Mr. Lilylipz, to be "*suttinly* transcendent beyond anythink. It is of that pure Græco-Gothic, which was brought over by William the Conqueror, and went out with the Saxons."

Stukeley encouraged the conversation, drawing out the presumptuous ignorance of Mr. Lilylipz, and the rusty nomeanings of the parent Cheesham into strong relief.

"Gentlemen, excuse me for breaking up your *tete-a-tete*. Have you got upon 'Shakspeare, taste, and the musical glasses?'" said Miss Emily, joining the trio. "Mr. Lilylipz, your friend tells me you sing. Will you break the dullness, and favour us?"

"Oh, I never do sing; and, besides, I am suffering from hoarseness."

"Come, come," replied Miss Emily, "none of these excuses, or we shall expect to find a very Braham, at least."

"Now, *really*!" remonstrated Mr. Lilylipz.

"Oh, never mind his nonsense, Miss Cheesham," exclaimed Mr. Blowze, from the other side of the room. "Lilylipz sings an uncommonly good song, when he likes. Give us 'the Rose of Cashmere,' or 'She wore a wreath of Roses.' Come away, now—no humbug!"

"Oh, that will be delightful!—pray, do sing!" were the exclamations of a dozen voices, at least. "Mr. Lilylipz' song!" shouted the elderly gentlemen of the party; and, forthwith, an awful stillness reigned throughout the apart-



ment. Upon this, Mr. Lilylipz blew his nose, coughed thrice, and, throwing himself back in his chair, rivetted his eyes, with the utmost intensity, upon a corner of the ceiling. Every one held back his breath in expectation, and the interesting young man opened upon the assemblage with a ballad all about an Araby maid, to whom a Christian knight was submitting proposals of elopement, which the lady appeared to be by no means averse to, for each stanza ended with the refrain, "Away, away, away!" signifying that the parties meant to be off somewhere as fast as possible. Mr. Lilylipz had just concluded verse the first, and the "Away, away, away!" had powerfully excited the imagination of the young ladies present, when the door opened, and the clinking of crystal ware announced the inopportune entrance of a maidservant bearing a trayful of glasses filled with that vile imbroglio of hot water and sugar coloured with wine, which passes in genteel circles by the name of negus. All eyes turned towards the door, and Mrs. Cheesham exclaimed, "Sally, be quiet!" but Mr. Eugene was too much enrapt by his own performance to feel the disturbance, and he tore away through verse the second with kindling enthusiasm. "Away, away, away!" sang the vocalist, when a crash and a scream arrested his progress. The servant maid had dropped the tray, and the glasses were rolling to and fro upon the floor in a confusion of fragments, while the delinquent, Sally, shrieking at the top of her voice, was making her way out at the door with all the speed she was mistress of.

"What the devil's that?" cried one. "The careless slut!" screamed another. "Such thoughtlessness!" suggested a third. "What the deuce could the woman mean?" asked a fourth. "It's the last night she sets foot in my house!" exclaimed Mrs. Cheesham, thrown off her dignity by the sudden shock.

"Bless me, you look unwell!" said Mr. Cheesham to Mr.



Lilylipz, who had turned deadly pale, and was altogether looking excessively unhappy.

"Oh, it is nothing. Only a constitutional nervousness. The start, the surprise, that sort of thing, you know; but it will go off in a moment. I shall just take a turn in the air for a little, and I'll be quite better."

The ladies were engaged in the contemplation of the wreck at the other end of the room, and Mr. Lilylipz, accompanied by his friend, stepped out at one of the drawing-room windows, which opened out upon the lawn. Frank Preston looked after them, and saw them in the moonlight, passing down the banks of the river among the trees, apparently engaged in earnest conversation.

"What do you think of this business, eh?" said Stukeley, rousing him from a reverie, by a tap upon the shoulder. "Queerish a little, isn't it?"

"Queerish *not* a little, I think; and blow me if I don't get to the bottom of it, or the devil's in it. That girl knows something of Mr. Eugene, I'll be sworn. We must get out of her what it is."

"Oh, no doubt she does. It wasn't the song that threw her off, although it was certainly vile enough for anything; it was himself; that is as clear as day. Let us off, hunt out the wench, and get the secret from her."

They left the room by the open window, and passing round the house to the servants' entrance, walked into the kitchen, where they found Sally labouring under strong excitement, as she narrated the incident which had led to her precipitate retreat from the drawing-room.

"To think of seeing him here; the base deceitful wretch! Cocked up in the drawing-room, forsooth, as if that were a place for him or the likes of him. Set him up indeed—a pretty story. But I know'd as how he'd never come to no good!"

"Who is he, my dear?" inquired Stukeley.



“Who is he, sir!—who should he be but Tom Newlands, the son of Dame Newlands of our village.”

“Oh, you must certainly be mistaken.”

“Never a bit mistaken am I, sir. I have too good reason for remembering him, the wretch! Oh, if I had him here, I wouldn’t give it him, I wouldn’t? I’d sarve him out, the deludin’ scoundrel. But he never was good for nothing since he went into the haberdashery line.”

“A haberdasher, is he? Capital!—capital! The man of fashion, eh, Frank?”

“The young man of *distingue* appearance!”

“And who’s his friend, Sally?”

“What! the other chap? Oh, I don’t know anything about him, except that he’s one of them man millinery fellows; and a precious bad lot they are, I know.”

“Glorious!—glorious!” cried Stukeley, crying with delight, as he walked out of the place with his friend. Here’s a discovery for some folks, isn’t it? The brilliant alliance, the high family, et cetera, et cetera, all dwindled into a measurer of tapes. Aren’t you proud of having had such a rival?”

“Oh, come, don’t be too hard upon me on that point. Mum, here we are at the drawing-room again. Not a word of what we have heard. If these scamps have made themselves scarce, as I think they have, good and well. But, if they venture to shew face here again, I shall certainly feel it to be my duty to pull their noses, and eject them from the premises by a summary process.”

“Oh, never fear, they will not put you to the trouble. They are off for good and all, or I am no prophet.”

Stukeley was right. The evening passed on, and the friends returned not. Infinite were the surmises which their absence occasioned, but the general conclusion was, that the interesting Mr. Lilylipz had found himself worse, and had retired to his inn for the night, along with his



faithful Achates. Morning came, but the friends did not make their appearance at the pumproom as usual. They were not at their inn; they were not in Potterwell. Whither they had wended, no one knew; but, like the characters in the ballad, which had been so oddly broken off, they were "away, away, away." They had come like shadows, and like shadows they had departed.

Some months afterwards, Mrs. Cheesham and her daughter Emily entered one of the extensive drapery warehouses of Edinburgh, to invest a portion of their capital in the purchase of a *mousseline de laine*. They had seen an advertisement which intimated that no lady ought, in justice to herself, to buy a dress of this description without first inspecting that company's stock of the article. They were determined to do themselves justice, and they went accordingly.

"Eugene," said the superintendent of the place, "shew these ladies that parcel of goods. A very superior article, indeed." Eugene! Eugene! the ladies had good reason to remember the name; and what was their surprise, on looking round, to see the exquisite of Potterwell bending under a load of dress pieces? If their surprise was great, infinitely greater was his dismay. His knees shook; his eyes grew dim; his head giddy. His hands lost their power, and, dropping the bundle, the unhappy Eugene stumbled over it in a manner painfully ignoble. Mrs. and Miss Cheesham turned to quit the shop, when there, behind them, stood the dashing Adolph. "The devil!" he exclaimed, and, ducking dexterously under the counter, disappeared among sundry bales that were piled beyond it. The lesson was not lost. Mrs. Cheesham had had quite enough of quality-hunting to satisfy her; and Miss Emily found out that it was desirable to be wise as well as witty, and gave her hand to Frank Preston, who forgave her temporary apostacy, not only because it had been smartly



punished by the result, but for the sake of the many estimable qualities which Miss Cheesham really possessed. Miss Fanny still roams, "in maiden meditation, fancy free," but she cannot do so long, or there is no skill in man. At all events, when she does want a husband, she will not go in search of him to COUNTRY QUARTERS.



## THE MONK OF ST. ANTHONY.

“When the devil was sick, the devil a monk would be ;  
When the devil grew well, the devil a monk was he.”

IN that very ancient and very filthy quarter of the town of Leith, called the Coal Hill, there flourished, in days of yore, a certain hostelrie kept by one David Wemyss. This house, which was distinguished by the figure of a ship, carved in high relief in stone over the lintel of the door, was one of good repute, and much resorted to by the seafaring people who frequented the port.

But it was not alone the good cheer and reasonable charges, for both of which “The Ship” was remarkable, that brought so many customers to David Wemyss: for this patronage he was as much indebted to his own civil and obliging manner, as to the considerations just mentioned, although, doubtless, these had their due weight with all considerate and reflecting men.

With all David’s civility of manner, however, there was thought to be a spice of the rogue in him ; just the smallest thing possible ; but it was a sort of good-humoured roguery. In the small trickery he practised, there was as much to laugh at as to deprecate ; for, being a facetious sort of personage himself, everything he did—good, bad, and indifferent—had a touch, less or more, of this quality about it ; so that he could hardly be said to have been liked a bit the less for his left-handed propensities ; the more especially that these were never exhibited in his dealings with his guests or customers, to whom he always acted the part of an obliging and conscientious landlord.



He knew this to be for his interest, and therefore did he abide by it.

At the period at which our story opens, namely, the year 1559, the Reformation, if it had not yet driven papacy entirely out of the land, had, at least, compelled it to retire into holes and corners, and to avoid, as much as possible, the public eye. One of the last retreats of the denounced religion in its adversity, was the preceptory of St. Anthony, in Leith. For the protection, or rather endurance, which it found here, it was indebted to the circumstance of the town's being, in an especial manner, under the patronage of Mary of Guise or Lorraine, the mother of the unfortunate Scottish queen of that name.

Conceiving Leith to be, as it was, a convenient point from which to correspond with France, and well situated for the reception of such supplies as might be sent her from that country, to enable her to make head against her discontented nobles, Mary made the town, as it were, her own; and to identify herself still more closely with it, made it also, for some time, her place of residence.

To this circumstance, then, was it owing, that after they had almost wholly disappeared everywhere else, a few monks might still be seen moving stealthily and crest-fallen through the streets of Leith. These belonged to the preceptory of St. Anthony, which stood at the upper or western end of the long, tortuous street, called the Kirkgate.

But even from this, one of its last places of refuge, was prelacy now about to be driven. The town, at the particular period to which our tale refers, was besieged by the lords of the congregation, aided by an army of three thousand English, under Lord Gray of Wilton, who had been despatched for this purpose by Elizabeth, to whom the Reformers had appealed in their necessities.

The reader, then, will understand that he is in a be-



leaguered town: that he is in Leith during the famous siege of that ancient seaport; when it was invested on all sides by the enemies of prelacy, and against whom it was defended, chiefly by a body of French troops, under a general of the name of D'Oysel, who had been sent from France to aid the Queen Regent in maintaining her authority in the kingdom.

Having despatched these preliminaries, we proceed with our story.

It was on a certain evening in the latter end of April, or beginning of May, 1559, that mine host of "The Ship" was suddenly summoned from his cellar, at a moment when he was employed in tapping a new hogshead of claret, by a gentle rap at a quiet back door which stood just beside the hatchway that led to the cellar in question.

This door, which had been contrived, or struck out, for the accommodation of private and confidential customers, who did not care to be seen entering "The Ship" by the front door, was accessible only through a complicated labyrinth of mean buildings, on a spot still known by the name of the Peat Neuk, and so called, from its having been the public depository of that description of fuel, before coals came into the general use in which they now are, and have long been.

"Wha's this?" muttered David Wemyss to himself, on hearing the gentle rap at the back door above spoken of, and, at the same time, laying down a bright tankard of claret, which he had just drawn from the newly broached hogshead. "Lang Willie Wilson, the herrin curer, I dare say, or the skipper o' the Cut-luggit Sow o' Kirkcaldy."

Thus conjecturing who his visiter might be, David Wemyss approached the door, undid its fastenings, and admitted, not Willie Wilson, the herring curer, nor the



Kirkcaldy skipper, but a certain worthy brother of the preceptory of St. Anthony, by name Peter Drinkhooly. Peter, who wore the dress of his order, namely, a loose, black cloth gown, had long been one of mine host of "The Ship's" private and confidential customers. He dearly loved a stoup of fresh claret; but both his character and calling compelled him to go cautiously about such carnal indulgences, and to trust no front doors with his secret.

Peter, however, although addicted to vinous propensities, was not what could be called a "jolly friar." He was rather a quiet, maudlin sort of a toper; neither boisterous in manner, nor reckless in disposition. He could, however, drink with the face of clay.

"Oh, father, is that you?" said David, on perceiving the black gown and slouched hat of his visiter. "I thocht it had been Willie Wilson, or the skipper. Stap awa in by there," pointing to the well-known sanctum of the back-door customers; "and I'll gie ye a tasting o' a fresh tap I was just at whan ye cam in."

Without saying a word in reply, Friar Drinkhooly glided into the little dark closet indicated by mine host, and there awaited the reappearance of the latter from the cellar with the promised sample of the new butt. Both quickly came.

"Awfu' times—father, awfu' times thae," said David, placing a tankard of claret on the table, and seating himself directly opposite his guest. "If this siege continues muckle langer, guid kens what'll become o' us. They tell me that some o' the Frenchmen hae ta'en to eatin their dead horses already, for want o' better provender. But they can cook up onything, thae Frenchers, and oan mak, I'm tell't, a savoury mess oot o' a pair o' auld boots. But come, tak a mouthfu' o' that," continued mine host, shoving the tankard towards his guest, "an' tell me what ye think o' our new browst."



Father Drinkhooly, who had not yet spoken a word, or in any other way noticed what had been addressed to him, than by nods and shakes of the head, readily obeying the gratifying invitation, seized the tankard, and, at one pull, emptied it of half its contents. Having performed this feat, he replaced the vessel on the table, wiped his mouth with a quiet, composed air, and, in a soft under-tone, said—

“Fair liquor, David—fair liquor. What size is the cask?”

“It’s a gey thumper,” replied mine host; big aneuch, I hope, to see oot the siege o’ Leith.”

“Ay, the heretic is pressing us hard, David. The strength of the wicked is prevailing,” said Father Drinkhooly; “but there will be a day of count and reckoning. It is coming, David, coming on the wings of the thunder, to blast and destroy the sacrilegious spoilers; to scaith and render barren this accursed land.”

“Weel, I wadna wonder,” replied David, looking very serious; for, although he cared little for either the new religion or the old, he had, if anything, rather a leaning towards the latter; at least, so was suspected; but this was a point not easily decided on, owing to the very accommodating nature of David’s doctrines, which, at a moment’s notice, could adapt themselves to any circumstances.

“I wadna wonder,” said David; “for I’m sure the spoilin and ravagin that’s gaun on is aneuch to bring down the judgments o’ Heaven on us. Heard ye if there hae been mony killed the day?”

“Alas! a very great number,” replied Father Drinkhooly. “There has been a terrible slaughter to-day, at the western block-house. The brethren and I have shrived some twenty or thirty departing souls, who fell by the cannon-shot of the enemy—two of them officers and men of rank in the French army—worthy, pious men—who



have left something considerable to the brotherhood. But God knows if we will be permitted to enjoy it."

"Ay," said David, pricking up his ears, as he always did when money, or property in any shape, became the subject of conversation—"That was a lucky wind-fa'; for I daresay the brethren are no oot o' need o' a wee assistance o' that kind enow. Times are no wi' them as they used to be. What feck, noo, if it's a fair question, did the twa Frenchmen leave ye?"

"It's not usual for us to speak of these things, David," replied Father Drinkhooly—"not usual for us to make these things the subject of irreverent discussion; but, as thou art an old friend, I will gratify thy curiosity—doing the same in confidence. Here," continued the worthy father, slipping his hand under his cloak, and drawing out a leathern bag well stored with coin, "here are a hundred and fifty crowns of the sun placed in my hands by one of these dying Christians, and here are three gold rings, worth fifty merks each, that were given unto me by the other, under pledge of saying fifteen masses for the well-being of the soul of the departed donor."

"My feth! no a bad day's work," said David. "It's an ill wind that blaws naebody guid. The siege is no like to be such a bad job for ye, after a'. Though ye should be driven oot o' the preceptory the morn, ye'll no gang empty-handed; and that same's a blessin. But here's to ye, father, and Gude send us mair peacefu' times;" saying this, mine host of "The Ship" cleared off the remainder of the tankard. On his replacing the latter on the table, brother Drinkhooly peered into the empty vessel with a half involuntary spirit of inquiry.

His host smiled. Then—"We maun replenish, I fancy," he said.

Father Drinkhooly simply nodded acquiescence, saying not a word.



In half a minute after, another tankard of claret reamed on the board, between mine host and his guest. By the time this second supply of the generous fluid was exhausted, brother Drinkhooly began to exhibit certain odd changes of manner. From being solemn and taciturn, he became energetic and talkative, thumping the table violently when he wished to be particularly impressive, and displaying, altogether, a boldness and vivacity which strangely contrasted with the quiet meekness of his demeanour but half an hour before. The claret then was doing its duty; for to its exciting influence were these changes in the moral man of brother Drinkhooly, of course, attributable.

It would not, we fear, much interest the reader to follow out in all its details the debauch now in progress of celebration by the landlord of "The Ship" and his worthy guest. Be it enough to say, that it finally ended in the latter's getting so overcome that he did not think it would be consistent either with his own character or the credit of the preceptory, to return to the latter until he had had, previously, an hour or two's sleep.

"'Deed, I dare say ye'll no be the waur o't," said mine host, on brother Drinkhooly's suggesting the propriety of this proceeding, "for that claret's gey an' steeve. I fin thae twa jugs touchin my ain garret a wee thing, and it used to tak sax to do that. But I'm no so able to staun't noo, as I was wont."

This was certainly true; but, even yet, David was more than a match over the claret stoup for any two men in the county. His capacity in this way was extraordinary; and no contemptible proof of the fact was afforded on the present occasion; for, while the priest was all but completely prostrated, his host had not, to use his own phrase, "turned a hair;" although he had drank quantity for quantity with the vanquished churchman.



Always kind and attentive to the wants of his guests, and, from a fellow feeling, especially tender of those who were in the helpless condition of brother Drinkhooly, David, desiring the latter to take his arm, conducted, or rather, smuggled him into a small back bedroom, helped him off with his gown and shovel hat, and tumbled him into bed, where he left him, with a promise to awake him at the expiry of two hours.

Having thus disposed of his clerical friend, David betook himself to the duties of the house: to the filling of measures of wine, brandy, and ale, to the running hither and thither, supplying the wants of one party of customers, soothing the impatience of another, and joining in the drunken laughter of a third.

David was thus employed, when he was attracted to the door by an alarming outcry on the street. On reaching the latter, he saw a boy approaching at his utmost speed, and bawling out—

“A priest, a priest! For the love o’ God, a priest to shrive a dying sinner. A priest, a priest!”

“What are ye screaming at, ye young rascal?” exclaimed David, intercepting the boy, and catching him by the breast. “Wha wants a priest?”

“It’s a French offisher, sir, that has just been struck enow wi’ a cannon-shot on the ramparts,” replied the boy; “and, as I was passing at the time, he bade me rin for a priest.”

“Was there naebody beside him?” inquired David.

“No ane, sir; and there’s naebody yet—for he’s lyin doon at the east end o’ the rampart, whar never a shot was kent to come before, as neither town’s folk nor Englishers is ever in that quarter.”

“Is he sair hurt?” said David.

“I’m thinking he is,” replied the boy. “But I maun awa up to St. Anthony’s, and get ane o’ the brethren.”



“Ye needna fash, my man,” said mine host of “The Ship.” “Hae, there’s a groat to ye. There’s ane o’ the brethren in my house, and I’ll send him up immediately to the puir man.”

The boy, well enough satisfied with this conclusion to his mission, went his ways, seeking to have nothing farther to do with the matter.

Now, good reader, would you suspect it, that our friend David Wemyss was at this moment acting under the influence of one of the most wicked temptations that ever led an unhappy wight from the paths of righteousness? You would not; yet it is true—too true. Tempted by the exhibition of the bequests confided to brother Drinkhooly by the two wounded French officers, David Wemyss, beguiled by the devil, conceived the atrocious idea of arraying himself in the hat and gown of the unconscious churchman, and of officiating as father confessor to the dying gentleman on the ramparts, in the hope that he too would leave something to the preceptory, and make him the interim recipient of the bequest. Circumstances, David thought, were favourable to the adventure. The night was dark, and the wounded man was lying at a remote part of the rampart, where there was no great chance of his being annoyed with many witnesses. The whole affair, besides, he calculated, would not occupy many minutes.

Encouraged to the sacrilegious undertaking by this combination of happy circumstances, David Wemyss hastened, on tiptoe, to the chamber of the sleeping brother, and, in a twinkling, had himself bedight in the gown and hat of the latter.

Thus arrayed, he stole out by the back door, and, taking all the by-ways he could, hastened, as fast as his legs could carry him, towards the south-eastern extremity of the ramparts. where, as described to him, the wounded man



was lying. David was thus pushing along, when he suddenly felt himself slapped on the shoulder by some one behind. He turned round, and beheld a man closely muffled up in a cloak, who thus addressed him:—

“Your pardon, holy father, for this somewhat uncourteous interruption; but the urgency of my case must plead my apology. An expiring sinner, holy father, claims your instant attendance. I will conduct you to her. Will you have the goodness to accompany me?”

“Impossible—impossible,” replied the counterfeit monk, in great perturbation at this most unexpected interruption, and threatened exposé. “I’m juist gaun on an errand o’ the same kind enow, and canna leave ae sinner for anither.”

“You will oblige me by accompanying me, good father,” said the stranger, in a mild tone, but with a firmness of manner that was rather alarming. “You will oblige me by accompanying me, good father,” he said, *looking* a little surprised at the style of the holy father’s language, but making no remark on the subject.

“Canna, sir—canna, canna, canna, on ony account,” repeated the unhappy brother of St. Anthony, with great volubility, and endeavouring to push past the stranger, who stood directly in his way, and who kept dodging in his front to prevent his succeeding in any attempt of this kind.

“Nay, now, good father, if you please—now, if you please, and without more bandying of words; for the case is urgent, and there is not a moment to lose.”

“Man, it’s oonpossible—utterly oonpossible,” replied David, with desperate energy. “I tell ye it’s oonpossible.”

“Do not compel me to use force, good father,” said the stranger, calmly but determinedly.

“Force—force!” reiterated the horror-stricken monk. “Wad ye use force to a holy brither o’ the preceptory? That wad be an awfu like thing.”



“I must; you drive me to it,” said the stranger—  
“Heaven knows how unwillingly. My orders were peremptory. They were to accost the first of your brethren I met; to entreat him to accompany me; and, if he refused, to compel him. The first I have done; the latter I must proceed to do; but, rest assured, no personal injury shall be done you; and you shall, moreover, be well rewarded for your trouble.”

Having said this, the stranger gave a low whistle, when he was immediately joined by two men, who had been concealed in a dark passage close by, and who the unhappy monk saw were well armed.

“Now, good father,” resumed the person by whom the latter had been first accosted, “I trust you will see the folly of any attempt at resistance, should you—which God forbid!—be indiscreet enough to entertain any such idea. Excuse me hinting farther, holy father, that any attempt at outcry, or at giving the slightest alarm of any kind, will be attended with unpleasant consequences.”

“But—but—but”—exclaimed the distracted innkeeper, with rapid utterance.

“No buts, if you please, good father, but follow me,” interrupted the stranger; and, saying this, he moved off, while his two companions placed themselves one on either side of their charge, and requested him to proceed.

Scarcely knowing what he did, but seeing very clearly that there would be imminent personal danger in farther remonstrance or resistance, the unlucky monk obeyed. This, however, he did only until he should have had time to reflect on his best course of proceeding—that is, until he should have taken it into due consideration whether he had not better brave exposure, and at once avow himself as no brother of St. Anthony, but David Wemyss, landlord of “The Ship,” on the Coal Hill of Leith—reserving to himself, however, the right of keeping the secret of his purpose



in assuming the garb of the brotherhood. Having weighed the matter well, and taken all probable and possible consequences into account, David finally determined on making the confession above alluded to—hoping by this means to put an end to the awkward proceedings now in progress, and to accomplish, of course, at the same time, his own liberation. Having come to this resolution—

“Hey! hey!” he exclaimed, in a slightly raised voice, to draw the attention of the principal of his three guards or captors, who was still walking a little way in advance.

The person thus hailed stopped until David came up. The latter took him aside a little way, and whispered in his ear—

“I say, man, this is a’ a mistak thegither. I’m no a monk. I’m no ane o’ the brotherhood at a’, man.”

The man stared at him with surprise for a few seconds, without saying a word. At length, a satirical, or perhaps rather incredulous smile playing on his countenance—

“Come, come, now, father; that will never do,” he said. “But I excuse your attempt, though a clumsy one, to impose on me; for the duties of your office have now become dangerous, and I do not wonder that you should seek to avoid them as much as possible. I was prepared for this—I was prepared for reluctance; and hence the precautions I took to compel, in case of failing to persuade.”

“But I assure ye, sir, most seriously, that it’s true I hae tell’t ye,” exclaimed David, with desperate eagerness, “I’m nae mair a monk than ye are.”

“And, pray, who the devil are you then?” exclaimed the stranger.

“’Deed, to tell you a Gude’s truth, I’m juist plain Davy Wemyss o’ ‘The Ship,’ on the Coal Hill.”

“Umph! oh! Don’t know such a person; never heard of him.”



"Od! that's queer," here interposed David, hastily. "I thocht everybody kent me."

"Not I for one," replied the stranger drily; "but, to cut this matter short, in the first place, I am not bound, good father, or hosteller, or whatever you are, to believe you; in the next, my orders were peremptory: I was instructed to accost the first person I met in clerical garb, and entreat him to accompany me; and, if he did not do so willingly, to compel him, as I told you before. So, there's an end of it. If you really be not what you appear to be, I can't help it. That's a point you must settle with others, not with me; I have nothing to do with it. My duty's done when I have brought you along with me; and that duty I am determined to do."

Saying this, the speaker, without waiting for farther remark or remonstrance, walked on, having previously made a sign to his two assistants to look to their charge."

What mine host of "The Ship's" feelings or reflections were, on finding himself thus cut off from all chance of escape from his awkward predicament, it would be rather tedious to describe. The reader will believe that they could not be very pleasant; and that is enough.

Whatever these feelings were, however, they did not hinder David Wemyss from entering, or rather attempting to enter, into conversation with the two men to whose charge he was confided.

"Od, men," he said, on their resuming their march, "this is an awkward sort o' business. I'm sure ye ken me weel aneuch—dinna ye?"

The only reply was a shake of the head.

"Davy Wemyss o' the Coal Hill? Ye canna but ken me, I should think," added the latter.

"No voord Ainglish," at length replied one of the men.

"Oh, ye're Frenchmen; ye belang to the Queen's



Guard?" said David, now enlightened on the subject of their silence. "Weel, this is waur and mair o't," he continued. "Sma chance noo o' makin oot my case."

In the meantime, the party, who had taken their way by the quietest and most circuitous routes, were rapidly approaching the wooden bridge over the Water of Leith, which, in these days, formed the only communication between the opposite sides of the river.

Having gained the bridge, they proceeded alongst it; and, thereafter, made for a certain outlet in the ramparts situated in this quarter. This outlet, as might be expected, seeing that the town was at this moment under siege, was strongly guarded, and no egress or ingress permitted excepting to persons properly accredited.

Of such, however, seemed to be the person who had captured the unlucky hero of our story; for, on David and his escort coming up to the gate, they found the way prepared for them by the former, who, keeping still in advance, had arrived there before them.

Without word or question, then, they were permitted to pass through.

At this point, David was strongly tempted to make his case known to the guard at the gate; but, perceiving that they too were all Frenchmen, he thought it would be of no use, as they would not understand him. So he held his tongue.

The guard—who, we need hardly say, were staunch Catholics to a man—were, in the meantime, sadly annoying David with reverences to his clerical character. They formed themselves into two lines, that he might pass out at the gate with all due honour, and kept touching their caps to him, with the most respectful obeisance, as he walked on between their ranks.

Having gained the outside of the wall, Wemyss' escort, still led on by their principal, conducted him, by circuitous



routes, towards the mills of Leith, at the distance of about a quarter of a mile from the town.

Here, under a shed, they found four horses ready saddled and bridled, in charge of a groom, who seemed to have been waiting their arrival. So soon as the party came up, the latter, without waiting for orders, disappeared for an instant; and, in the next, presented himself leading forth the four horses, two by each hand. On one of these David, notwithstanding his most earnest entreaties to the contrary, which he backed by earnest assurances that "he was nae horseman," was immediately mounted. His guards mounted one a-piece of the others; and the whole cavalcade now proceeded, at a round trot, towards Edinburgh—poor Wemyss bouncing terribly with the roughness of the motion, to which he had been but little accustomed.

On approaching the city, the leader of the party, who, on horseback as on foot, still kept in advance, suddenly drew bridle, and waited the coming up of the holy brother and his escort.

On the former drawing near—

"Our route, father, lies through Edinburgh," he said. "Now, as these are troublesome times for persons of your cloth, I would recommend your conducting yourself, for your own sake, as warily as possible. We shall take the quietest routes, in order to avoid observation; and I beg that you will neither say nor do anything while we are passing through the city calculated to defeat our caution or attract notice."

Having said this, and without waiting for any reply, the speaker rode on, leaving his charge to follow with his escort.

The party had now passed the village of Broughton, when, turning in an easterly direction, they passed round the eastern base of the Calton Hill, descended to the south



back of the Canongate, traversed its whole length, and finally entered the city by Leith Wynd.

For some time, the horsemen passed along without attracting any particular notice; and, very probably, would have continued to do so, had it not been for an idle boy, who, catching a glimpse of the brother of St. Anthony's flowing gown and slouched hat, just as the party had turned into the High Street, set up a loud cry of—

“Prelacy's mounted! prelacy's mounted! Hurra! hurra! Prelacy's mounted! and riding to ——.”

Continuing to follow the cavalcade, and continuing his clamour also, the mischievous little rascal soon had a crowd at the heels of the horsemen. The boy's exclamations spoke the spirit of the times; so that others of a similar character soon arose from twenty different quarters, and from as many different voices.

“Doon wi' the limb o' Satan!” shouted one.

“Doon wi' the man o' sin!” shouted another.

“Pu' Papery frae its throne o' iniquity!” exclaimed a third.

“Strike your spurs into your horse's sides, and let us shew them clean heels for it,” said the leader of the party, addressing his unhappy charge, by whose side he was now riding, and speaking in a low but firm and earnest tone.

“But, man,” began the latter, who appeared to be in great trepidation.

“You'll be murdered else,” said the former, interrupting him sharply, and, at the same moment, striking the spurs into his horse's sides—a proceeding which instantly carried him clear of the crowd, and, shortly after, out of sight and out of danger.

The prudent example of their leader was quickly followed by the other two men, who, also, clapping spurs to their horses, soon found themselves out of the tumultuous throng by which they were surrounded, to whose tender mercies



they left their unhappy charge, who being, as he said himself, no horseman, was unable to extricate himself from the now fast-thickening crowd.

Despairing of being able to effect his escape by any effort of horsemanship, the poor innkeeper, though with little hope of being believed, determined on divulging the facts of his case to the mob—always, however, of course, reserving to himself the original purpose for which he had assumed the unfortunate dress he now wore, the cause of all his trouble.

Having come to this resolution, he began to address the mob, some of whom had already laid hands on him, for the purpose of dragging him from his horse.

“Guid folks,” began David, “I’m nae mair a munk than ony o’ ye. I’m”——

At this moment, a well-aimed brick-bat took the unfortunate speaker on the right temple, and tumbled him senseless from his horse.

The mob, somewhat appalled by the suddenness of this catastrophe, and imagining that the unhappy man was killed outright, stood aloof for a few seconds, when David, almost instantly recovering from the stunning effect of the blow, which had unhorsed him, started to his feet, and, finding the press around him not very dense, pushed his way through it, and took to his heels.

This proceeding was the signal for a general chace, and it instantly took place. Relieved from the apprehension of having a murder to answer for, the mob, with shouts of exultation, started after the fugitive at full speed. Down Leith Wynd went David, instinct taking him in the direction of home; and down after him, like an avalanche, or raging torrent, went the mob, whooping and yelling as they rushed along.

Maddened and distracted with terror, David’s progress was splendid, and, had nothing occurred to interrupt it,



would soon have carried him out of the reach of his enemies; but the steepness of the street, which had aided his velocity, also increased its perils. For a long while he kept his feet on the abrupt declivity, like a winged Mercury; but a treacherous inequality in the pavement brought him suddenly, and with dreadful violence, down on his face, while, partly over and partly on him, went half-a-dozen of the foremost of the pursuers, tripped up by his abrupt and unlooked-for prostration.

Those who fell on the unhappy victim of popular fury, now instantly, and, as they lay, betook themselves to avenging their fall by tearing and worrying at the unlucky cause of their accident; while others coming up, added to his punishment by an unmerciful infliction of kicks and buffets, that quickly deprived him of all consciousness.

It was at this critical moment that a person, apparently of consideration, approached the crowd, and asked some of those who were hovering around it, what was the meaning of the uproar.

“They’re bastin a Papist—a fat priest o’ Baal, they hae gotten haud o’,” said a burly fellow who, from the leathern apron he wore, appeared to be a shoemaker. “Giein him a taste o’ Purgatory before they send him to ——, just by way o’ seasonin.”

“What, is this more of the accursed doings of the spoilers and persecutors of the church,” exclaimed the stranger, in a tone of deep indignation. “Are they about to add murder to robbery;” and, drawing his sword, he rushed into the crowd, calling out—“Stand aside, ye caitiffs! shame on ye; would ye murder a defenceless man? Would ye bring Heaven’s wrath upon your heads by so foul a deed?”

The crowd, either awed by the bold bearing of the stranger, or taken by surprise by the suddenness of his assault, readily opened a way for him, so that, in an in-



stant, he stood by the bruised, battered, and senseless body of our unhappy brother of St. Anthony.

Seeing that the latter was in a state of utter unconsciousness, though still living, the stranger, after clearing a circle around the prostrate man, addressing those near him, said—

“Ten crowns will I give to any three or four amongst ye who will bear this unfortunate person whither I shall conduct them. It is not far: only to the southern side of the city.”

For a few minutes there was no answer to this invitation; but it was heard with a silence which shewed that it had made an impression—that religious zeal and hatred were giving way to cupidity.

At length, a brawny-armed smith, with shirt rolled up to his shoulders, stepping out of the crowd, said—

“Well, I’m your man for one. I say, Bob, and you Archy,” he continued, turning round, and selecting two persons from the mob, “will ye no join us in giein a lift to the carrion? Ten croons are no to be fand at every dike-side.”

Without making any reply in words to this appeal, the two persons named came forward, although with a somewhat dogged and sullen air, and were about to seize limbs a-piece of the still unconscious victim of popular hatred, with the view of thus transporting him, as if he had been a dead dog, to the destination proposed for him, when the person who had now taken the unfortunate man in charge, objected to the unseemly and inhuman proceeding, and offered an additional crown for a bier or litter on which to place him.

The activity of the smith, stimulated by the increased reward, quickly produced the conveniency wanted. It was but a coarse and clumsy article; being nothing more than a few rough boards hastily put together; but it answered its purpose indifferently well.



On this latter, then, the body of our unlucky brother was now placed—his face dreadfully swollen and disfigured; and the procession moved off, with a shouting and laughing mob at its heels.

Leaving David thus disposed of, we will return to Leith for a space, to see how Drinkhooly came on, denuded as he was of his shovel hat and his gown.

On awaking from his nap, the worthy churchman, not well pleased that David had not come to rouse him as he promised, started up in great uneasiness, lest the gates of the preceptory should be shut, and his character as a regular living man be thereby injured.

What was the surprise of the good man, however, to find that he had been stripped of his gown while he slept, and left in his shirt sleeves. Alarmed at the circumstance, brother Drinkhooly began searching the apartment for the missing garment, and also for his hat, which he now found had likewise gone astray.

Being able to discover no trace of the missing articles, he commenced rapping on the door to bring some one to his assistance, although very unwilling to expose himself in his present predicament to any but his well-beloved crony, David Wemyss. He could not help himself, however. His gown and hat he must have. He could not leave the house without them, and without assistance they could not be got.

The worthy brother's rapping on the door being unattended to, he commenced with his heel on the floor, a proceeding which he had often found, as it has been facetiously termed, an "*effectual calling*."

In the present instance, it brought mine host's wife into his presence. On her entering—

"Good woman, good Mrs. Wemyss, I would say, know ye anything of mine outer garment? My gown, know ye where it has been deposited? I likewise lack my



hat, good Mrs. Weymss; know ye what has become of it?"

"Truly, your reverence, I dinna ken," replied Mrs. Weymss, beginning to bustle about the apartment in search of the desiderated articles; "but they canna be far aff, surely. Does your reverence no mind whar ye laid them?"

"My hat, I recollect perfectly—there being no reason why I should not recollect it—I laid on this chair by the bedside here. Now it is gone. My gown I laid nowhere, but kept on me. So, of that garment I must have been denuded even while I slept. It is strange. Is my good friend David not in the way? He would, doubtless, explain all, and help me to mine outer covering and head-gear?"

"Indeed, no, your reverence, David's no in the way; and I canna tell whar he is. He's been missing oot o' the house thae three hours; and gaed aff without telling ony o' us whar he was gaun, or what he was gaun aboot. Indeed, nane o' us kent when he gaed. Sae he maun hae slippit aff unco cannily."

In the meantime, the search for the missing articles of dress went on vigorously, but without any good result. They were nowhere to be found.

"What's to be done?" said the good father in a despairing tone, as he threw himself into a chair. I cannot go through the streets in this indecent condition, and, if I remain longer, I will be deemed a disregarder of canonical hours. What is to be done?"

"Deed it's an awkward thing, your reverence, and how ye are to gae hame in your sark sleeves, and your bald head to the win, I dinna see."

"I'll tell you what you'll do for me, my good Mrs. Weymss," said the worthy father, after thinking a moment: "You'll send up your little girl to the preceptory, and I'll



give her a message to Brother Christie. I think he'll oblige me in a strait. He'll send me down a gown and hat wherewith I may hie me home, and your good husband, and my good friend, David, will, doubtless, find me mine own garments when he returns."

"Surely, your reverence, surely; Jessy 'll be but owre prood to do your reverence's biddin," replied Mrs. Weymss, and she hastened to call her daughter.

On the girl making her appearance, the worthy brother gave her her instructions.

He desired her to go to the preceptory; to ask a private word of Brother Christie; and to say to him that he, Drinkhooly, had got into tribulation. That, having some matters of private concernment to talk over with mine host of "The Ship," he had called on him, and that, while there, overcome with exhaustion, in consequence of his late fatiguing duties, he had fallen asleep, and that, while he slept, some one had removed his gown and hat, and that he could nowhere find the same, and could not therefore return to the preceptory unless his good brother, Christie, would furnish him with the loan of these two articles, the which, he had no doubt, he would readily do.

Charged with this rather long-winded message, the girl departed on her mission. In less than a quarter of an hour she returned, but brought neither hat nor gown.

"Has he refused them?" inquired the worthy brother, with a look of grievous discomfiture, when he saw the girl enter without the much-desired articles. "What did he say?"

"He said, sir," replied the girl, who was both too young and too single-minded to think of saving any one's feelings at the expense of truth, "that, if ye had drank less o' David Wemyss' claret, ye wad hae kenned better what had become o' your gown and hat."

"*O scandalum magnatum!*" exclaimed the indignant



priest. "Doth he—doth Brother Christie accuse me of vinous indulgences? Him whom I have, a hundred times, helped to his dormitory, when incapacitated therefrom by the excess of his potations. And he would not give thee the garments?"

"No, please you, sir; he said ye micht gang without the breeks for him. He wadna send ye a stitch."

It became now matter for serious consideration what was to be done. It was true that the good father might easily have been arrayed for the nonce in a coat and hat of his friend, David Wemyss', and might, so attired, pass unheeded through the streets. But how was he to account for his appearance in such an unseemly garb at the preceptory. It might lead to some awkward inquiries as to how the good brother had spent the evening.

There was no other way for it, however. So, equipped in the deficient articles from mine host of "The Ship's" wardrobe, Brother Drinkhooly stole out of the house, slunk along the streets, gained the gate of the preceptory, knocked thereat, whispered two or three words of explanation to the porter, with whom he was fortunately in good terms, and, finally, got snugly to his own dormitory without detection.

To return to mine host of "The Ship." It was not for nearly twelve hours after the occurrence of the tragical affair of Leith Wynd, that David Wemyss was restored to a consciousness of existence. When he was, conceive, if you can, reader, his surprise and amazement to find himself in a superb bed, hung round with rich crimson velvet curtains, and whose coverlets were of satin fringed with gold. The room, which was also gorgeously furnished, was so darkened when David awoke from the refreshing sleep which had restored him to the possession of his senses, that it was some time before he discovered all the splendours with which he was surrounded.



When these, however, had at length begun to take his eye, he started up on his elbow, and, with a mingled look of perplexity, consternation, and bewilderment, commenced a survey of the magnificent chamber of which he thus so strangely and inexplicably found himself an occupant.

How or when he had been brought there, he could not conceive; neither, for a good while, had he any recollection whatever of the pummelling with which he had been favoured in Leith Wynd. The operation, however, of certain physical effects of that incident—namely, a painful aching of the bones, and an almost total inability to move either leg or arm, gradually unfolded to him, although only in a dim and confused manner, the occurrence of the preceding night.

In the meantime, David went on with his survey of the apartment, during which he perceived two objects that convinced him that he was in the house of a Roman Catholic—of one of those who still clung to the ancient religion of the kingdom, and who held in detestation and abhorrence the doctrines of the new faith.

These objects were a large painting, over the fireplace, of the Saviour on the Cross, and a small silver crucifix which stood on a table close by the side of the bed; there was also lying on the floor, opposite the crucifix, and near to it, a crimson velvet cushion with gold tassels on which were such indentations as intimated its having been recently knelt upon.

Having completed the examination of his new premises, David Wemyss threw himself back on the bed, in order to take a deliberate survey in his own mind of his present strange position, and of all the circumstances connected therewith.

“’Od, but this is a most extraordinar affair, and a dooms awkward ane,” thought David, to himself. “Wha wad hae dreamed o’t. Wha wad hae dreamed that sae simple a



thing as me putting on Drinkhooly's gown, wad hae led to a' this mischief.

"What'll they think's become o' me in Leith? And what'll I say for mysel whan I gae back? And what'll Drinkhooly do for his gown? Od, they'll excommunicat him; they'll ruin him. God help us, it's an awfu' business. But, whar am I?—Wha's house is this, and hoo got I till't? And hoo and whan am I to get hame again; for I fin' that I couldna keep a leg under me enow, an it were to mak me provost o' Edinburgh."

At this moment, David's somewhat disjointed, though pertinent enough reflections, were interrupted by the entrance of some one into the apartment.

The intruder, whoever he was, came in on tiptoe, as if fearful of disturbing the occupant of the apartment; and, on approaching the bed, peered cautiously into it, to see whether he was awake.

David, without saying a word, stared at the person, who appeared to be a serving man or cook, from his wearing a blue velvet cap on his head—the usual head-dress of such persons in those times, and his bearing a steaming silver posset dish in one hand.

David, as we have said, stared at the man, without saying a word—a line of proceeding which he adopted, in order that the other, by speaking first, might give him a sort of cue by which to guide himself in the impending colloquy.

Seeing that the patient was awake, the man, bowing respectfully, said:—

"I trust, holy father, I find you better. Here is a posset which has been prepared for you by the directions of our leech, worthy Dr. Whang o' the Cowgate Head, which you will be so good as take."

"My man," said David, without either accepting or refusing the proffered posset, "I'm misdoubtin that there's



a sad mistak in this business a'thegither. Howsomever, let that flee stick to the wa' for the present. Can ye tell me whar I am, and hoo I cam here?"

"Most assuredly, holy father. You are just now in the house, and under the protection and guardianship of Lady Wisherton of Wisherton Mains, whose house is situated about two hundred yards south of the Kirk of Field. As to the manner of your coming here, holy father, it was this:—Her ladyship's son, Lord Boggyland, coming up Leith Wynd last night, found you in the midst of a crowd of sacrilegious ruffians, who were murdering you, and who had already, by their brutal treatment, deprived you of all consciousness. Seeing this, his lordship, who, as all his family—his good and pious mother included—are staunch adherents of the old religion, instantly interfered in your behalf, and had you conveyed to his mother's house, where, as I have already said, you are at the present moment."

"Umph," muttered David. "Is that the way o't. Then, I fancy, I'm juist oot o' the fryin-pan into the fire."

The serving-man, not perceiving the applicability of the remark, although somewhat surprised at it, made no reply, but again pressed the posset on the suffering martyr.

"Weel, weel, let's see't then," said David, raising himself up in the bed. "There can be nae great harm in that, I fancy. It'll no mak things muckle waur than they are. Is't onything tasty?"

His attendant assured him that he would find it very pleasant, being made by her ladyship's own hands, who long enjoyed a high reputation for manufacturing possets and comfits of all sorts.

Having raised the lid of the posset dish, and flavoured it contents, David pronounced it "savoury;" when, taking spoon in hand, he cleared out the vessel in a twinkling.

"A gusty mouthfu' that," said mine host of "The Ship,"



throwing himself luxuriously back on his pillow, "although I think it wadna been the waur o' a wee hair mair brandy in't."

The serving-man having done his errand, now left the room, retiring with the same careful step and respectful manner with which he had entered, and left David once more to his own reflections.

In these, however, he was permitted but a very short indulgence. His attendant had not been gone five minutes, when the door of the apartment was again gently opened, and an elderly lady, of tall and majestic form, arrayed in a close fitting dress of black velvet, with a gold chain round her neck, from which was suspended a large diamond cross, entered the sick man's chamber. It was Lady Wisherton herself. Approaching, with stately step, but with a look of tender concern, the bed on which her patient lay—

"It rejoices me much, holy father," she said, "to learn, from our good and faithful servitor, William Binkie, that your reverence begins to feel some symptoms of amendment."

"Ou, thank ye, mem, thank ye," replied David, with no small trepidation; for the dignified and stately appearance of his visiter had sadly appalled him. "I fin' mysel a hauntle better, thanks to your leddyship's kindness—takin' ye to be Leddy Wisherton hersel', as I hae nae doot ye are."

"You are right in your conjecture, good father," replied Lady Wisherton, rather taken aback by the very peculiar style of his reverence's language, which she did not recollect ever to have met with in any other person in holy orders before. The circumstance, however, only puzzled her; it did not, in the smallest degree, excite in her any suspicion of the real facts of the case. "You are right in your conjecture, good father," she said, "I am Lady Wisherton."



“So I was jalousin, mem,” said David, who, by the way, we may as well mention here, had made up his mind to endeavour to avoid exposure, by not saying or doing anything to undeceive Lady Wisherton as to his real character, and to trust to some fortunate chance of getting, undetected, out of the house.

“O father!” said Lady Wisherton, bursting out into a sudden paroxysm of pious excitation, “what is to become of our poor persecuted church? When will a judgment descend on this unholy land, for the monstrous sins by which it is now daily polluted. Oh, dreadful times!—oh, unheard of iniquity! that a priest of God—a father of our holy church—should be attacked on the public streets of this city, and put in jeopardy of his life by a mob of heretical blasphemers! When will these atrocities cease? Oh, when, when, when?”

“Deed, mem, it’s no easy sayin,” replied the subject of this pathetic lamentation. “They’re awfu’ times. Nae man leevin ever saw or heard o’ the like o’ them. There, doon at Leith enow, they’re murderin ane anither by the dizzen every day, and no comin a bit nearer the point after a’. Heaven kens whar it’s to end. In the meantime, they hae gien me a confounded lounderin; I fin’ that in every bane o’ my body.”

“You have been sorely abused by them, indeed, father,” replied Lady Wisherton. “But a day of retribution is coming. You will be avenged, terribly avenged.”

“There was ae fallow, in particular, amang them, that I wad like to see gettin a guid creeshin,” replied David: “*that* was a great big scounneril o’ a blacksmith, wi’ his shirt sleeves rowed up to his shouthers. He was the warst o’ the lot. I got mair and heavier waps frae him than frae a’ the rest put thegither.”

Again, Lady Wisherton looked surprised at the style of language in which her reverend patient spoke, his last



remarks being particularly rich in the homely vernacular of the country, and greatly was her perplexity increased by the discordance between his calling and his manner, which was every moment becoming more and more marked; still she did not, nor could suspect the truth.

“Was it not a blessing of Providence, father,” resumed Lady Wisherton, “that my son, Lord Boggyland, happened to be in Leith Wynd at the time you were attacked by these sacrilegious ruffians?”

“Feth, my leddy, it was just that,” replied David—“A Gude’s mercy. They gied me a bonny creeshin as it was; but they wad hae dished me clean oot an it hadna been for him. Feth, yon fellows care nae mair for a man’s life than they wad do for a puddock’s.”

“Your reverence’s face is much swelled,” said Lady Wisherton, suddenly attracted by the swollen and discoloured countenance of her patient. “Greatly swelled. You must allow me to bathe it with my lotion.”

“Nae occasion, mem, nae occasion, thank ye; I dinna find it ony way painfu. Besides, I’ll try and get up, towards the darkenin, and be steppin doon to Leith; for they’ll be wonderin there what’s come o’ me.”

It will be seen from this that our brother of St. Anthony contemplated an early retreat from his present quarters; and further, that he meant to avail himself of the obscurity of night to effect that retreat. But this was a point not to be so very easily managed as he thought.

“Leave my house this afternoon!” exclaimed Lady Wisherton, in the utmost amazement. “That, with your reverence’s leave, indeed, you shall not do. You shall remain where you are, under my tendance, until you be perfectly recovered, which we dare not hope for under a fortnight, at the very least. But, in the meantime, good father, you shall have every attendance, every comfort which you can desire, or of which your situation will admit.



My son and I are but too happy, although we deplore the cause, of having been presented with an opportunity of testifying our reverence and love for a minister of our holy religion.

“As to your fears,” she continued, “for any uneasiness among your friends in Leith, on account of your absence, be not concerned about that, good father; I have provided for it. I have sent notice to the preceptory of your misfortune, relating all that has happened, and giving intimation that you are in my house, and in safety; so have no doubt that some of the brethren will be here in the course of the evening.”

Here was a pretty piece of information for the already but too much perplexed martyr to the old faith. Intimation had been sent to the preceptory, and half-a-dozen of the brethren would be in upon him immediately, and a dreadful exposé would, of course, follow. It was a most trying crisis, and David but too sensibly felt it to be so. He felt as if he could have wished the house to fall upon him, and bury him in its ruins.

Appalled and horrified, however, as he was at this impending catastrophe, he said nothing, but, anxious to be left alone, in order to have an opportunity of thinking over his position, and of taking into consideration what had best be done, he began to affect drowsiness; when his noble hostess, taking the hint, quietly left the apartment.

Hearing the door close, David first opened one eye cautiously, and then the other; then turning gently round, peered over the edge of the bed to see if the coast was clear. Discovering that it was, he threw himself again on his back, and, fixing his eyes on the roof, began thinking as hard as he could how he was to get out of his present dilemma. The sequel will tell the result of his deliberations.

On that same night, about twelve of the clock, David



Wemyss' worthy spouse—who had been in great distress at his sudden disappearance, and who was fully impressed with the belief that he had fallen over the quay and had been drowned—was startled by a low tap-tapping at the back door of "The Ship." Thinking it might be some one with tidings of her lost husband, she instantly got up, lighted a candle, and, although under no little apprehension and alarm, opened the door, when, lo! who should enter but her beloved David himself. She instantly set up a scream of delight.

"Whisht, whisht, woman," said David, stealing into a back apartment as fast as he could. "This is no a business to blaw about. The calmer sough we keep the better."

"But, gude sake, David," said his wife, on rejoining him, after having secured the door, whar hae ye been a' this time, and whar hae ye gotten that awfu-like face?"

"I hae gotten a hantle mair than that, guidwife, although ye dinna see't," replied David. "I dinna believe there's a hale bane in my entire buik. I hae had a bonny time since I left ye; aneuch to serve a man his hale life time; and yet it was a' crammed into ae four-and-twenty hours. But gie me a mouthfu o' brandy, guidwife, and I'll tell ye a' about it."

David now proceeded with his narration, giving his wife a detailed account of the series of adventures related in the foregoing pages. To these we have now to add only a reference to one or two points, which will be considered, probably, as requiring some explanation.

First, as to how our brother of St. Anthony escaped from Lady Wisherton's. This he effected by the simple process of stealing out of the house after dark. There was no other way for it, and he was fortunate enough to succeed in the somewhat hazardous attempt, by dropping



himself from a window of a story in height, at the back part of the house.

Who the person was who first laid hands on mine host of "The Ship," on his first appearance in his new character, or by whom he was employed, he never certainly knew, but suspected afterwards that he was a retainer of Lord Borthwick's, who was then in Leith with the Queen Regent. Whither, however, he meant to have taken him, or who the sufferer was for whom the last duties of religion were wanted, he never learnt; nor, indeed, for obvious reasons, did he ever inquire. The whole, in short, was a subject on which David Wemyss always thought the less that was said the better; and, acting on this opinion, it was one which he carefully abstained from making matter of conversation.

All his caution, however, could not prevent some hints of his adventure from getting abroad. These hints some of the little ragged scapegraces of the Coal Hill wrought into the following rhymes, which, in dark nights, they were in the habit of shouting in at the door of "The Ship," to the great annoyance of its landlord, who might frequently be seen rushing out, stick in hand, to inflict summary punishment on the offenders:—

"Davie Wemyss gaed oot a priest,  
By filthy lucre temptit;  
Davie Wemyss cam hame again,  
And thocht naebody kent it."



## THE STORY OF CLARA DOUGLAS.

“The maid that loves,  
Goes out to sea upon a shattered plank,  
And puts her trust in miracles for safety.”—*Old Play*.

I AM a peripatetic genius—a wanderer by profession—a sort of Salathiel Secundus, “doomed for a term,” like the ghost of Hamlet’s papa, “to walk the earth,” whether I will or not. Here, however, the simile stops; for his afore-said ghostship could traverse, if he chose, amid climes far away, while the circuit of my peregrinations is, has for sometime been, and must, for some short time more, necessarily be, confined to the northern extremity of “our tight little island”—*vulgo vocato*—Scotland. In my day I have seen many strange sights, and met with many strange faces—made several hairbreadth ’scapes, and undergone innumerable perils by flood and field. On the wings of the wind—that is, on the top of a stage-coach—I have passed through many known and unknown towns and villages; have visited, on foot and on horseback, for my own special edification and amusement, various ancient ruins, foaming cataracts, interesting rocks, and dismal-looking caves, celebrated in Scottish story. But better far than that, and dearer to my soul, my foot has trod the floors of, I may say, all the haberdashers shops north of the Tweed: in short, most patient reader, I am a travelling bagman.

In this capacity I have, for years, perambulated among the chief towns of Scotland, taking orders from those who were inclined to give them to me, and giving orders to those who were not inclined to take them from me, unless with a *douceur* in perspective—viz., coachmen, waiters,



bar-maids, *et hoc genus omne*. From those of the third class, many are the witching smiles lighting up pretty faces—many the indignant glances shot from deep love-darting eyes, when their under neighbours, the lips, were invaded without consent of parties—which have saluted me everywhere; for the same varied feelings, the same sudden and unaccountable likings and dislikings, have place in the breasts of bar-maids as in those of other women. As is the case too with the rest of their sex, there are among them the clumsy and the handsome, the plain and the pretty, the scraggy and the plump, the old and the young; but of all the bar-maids I ever met with, none charmed me more than did Mary of the Black Swan, at Altonby. In my eyes she inherited all the good qualities I have here enumerated—that is to say, she was handsome, pretty, plump, and young, with a form neither too tall nor too short; but just the indescribable happy size between, set off by a manner peculiarly graceful.

It was on a delightful evening in the early spring, that I found myself seated, for the first time, in a comfortable little parlour pertaining to the Black Swan, and Mary attending on me—she being the chief, nay, almost the only person in the establishment who could serve a table. I was struck with her loveliness, as well as captivated with her engaging manner, and though I had for thirty years defied the artifices of blind Cupid, I now felt myself all at once over head and ears in love with this village beauty. Although placed in so low a sphere as that in which I then beheld her, there was a something about her that proclaimed her to be of gentle birth. Whoever looked upon her countenance, felt conscious that there was a respect due to her which it is far from customary to extend to girls in waiting at an inn. Hers were

“Eyes so pure, that from their ray  
Dark vice would turn abashed away.”



Her feet were small and fairy-like, from which, if her voice, redolent of musical softness—that thing so desirable in woman—had not already informed me, I should have set her down as being of English extraction.

Several months elapsed ere it was again in my power to visit Altonby. During all that time, my vagrant thoughts had been of Mary—sleeping or waking, her form was ever present to my fancy. On entering the Black Swan, it was Mary who bounded forward to welcome me with a delighted smile. She seemed gratified at my return; and I was no less so at the cordiality of my reception. The month was July, and the evening particularly fine; so, not having business of much consequence to transact in the place, and Mary having to attend to the comforts of others, beside myself, then sojourning at the Black Swan, I sallied forth alone—

“To take my evening’s walk of meditation.”

When one happens to be left *per se* in a provincial town, where he is alike unknowing and unknown—where there is no theatre or other place of amusement in which to spend the evening—it almost invariably happens that he pays a visit to the churchyard, and delights himself, for an hour or so, with deciphering the tombstones—a recreation extremely healthful to the body, and soothing to the mind. It was to the churchyard on that evening I bent my steps, thinking, as I went along, seriously of Mary.

“What is she to me?” I involuntarily exclaimed; “I have no time to waste upon women: I am a wanderer, with no great portion of worldly gear. In my present circumstances it is impossible I can marry her; and to think of her in any other light were villanous. No, no! I will no longer cherish a dream which can never be realized.”

And I determined that, on the morrow, I should fly the fatal spot for ever. Who or what Mary’s relations had



been, she seemed to feel great reluctance in disclosing to me. All I could glean from her was, that she was an orphan—that she had had a sister who had formed an unfortunate attachment, and broken their mother's heart—that all of her kindred that now remained was a brother, and he was in a foreign land.

The sun was resting above the summits of the far-off mountains, and the yew trees were flinging their dusky shadows over the graves, as I entered the burial-place of Altonby. The old church was roofless and in ruins; and within its walls were many tombstones over the ashes of those who, having left more than the wherewithal to bury them, had been laid there by their heirs, as if in token of respect. In a distant corner, I observed one little mound over which no stone had been placed to indicate who lay beneath: it was evidently the grave of a stranger, and seemed to have been placed in that spot more for the purpose of being out of the way than for any other. At a short distance from it was another mound, overtopped with grass of a fresher kind. As I stood leaning over a marble tombstone, gazing around me, a figure slowly entered at the farther end of the aisle, and, with folded arms and downcast eyes, passed on to those two graves. It was that of a young man of perhaps five-and-twenty, though a settled melancholy, which overspread his countenance, made him look five years older. I crouched behind the stone on which I had been leaning, fearful of disturbing him with my presence, or rousing his attention by my attempting to leave the place.

After gazing with a vacant eye for a few moments upon the graves, he knelt down between them. His lips began to move, but I heard not what he said. I thought he was praying for the souls of the departed; and I was confirmed in this by hearing him at last say, with an audible voice:—



"May all good angels guard thee, Clara Douglas, and thou, my mother!"

As he uttered these last words, he turned his eyes to the newer grave. I thought he was about to continue his prayer; but, as if the sight of the grave had awakened other feelings, he suddenly started up, and, raising his hands to heaven, invoked curses on the head of one whom he termed their "murderer!" That done, he rushed madly from the church. All this was very strange to me; and I determined, if possible, to ascertain whose remains those graves entombed.

On leaving the churchyard, I was fortunate enough to forgather with an old man, from whom I learned the melancholy story of her who occupied the older-looking grave. She was young and beautiful. Accident had deprived her father of that wealth which a long life of untiring industry had enabled him to lay past for his children; and he did not long survive its loss. Fearful of being a burden to her mother, who had a son and another daughter besides herself to provide for out of the slender pittance which remained to her on her husband's death, Clara Douglas accepted a situation as a governess, and sought to earn an honourable independence by those talents and accomplishments which had once been cultivated for mere amusement. The brother of Clara, shortly afterwards, obtained an appointment in the island of Madeira. Unfortunately for Clara, a young officer, a relative of the family in which she resided, saw her, and was smitten with her charms. He loved and was beloved again. The footing of intimacy on which he was in the house, procured him many interviews with Clara. Suddenly his regiment was ordered to the Continent; and when the young ensign told the sorrowful tidings to Clara, he elicited from her a confession of her love.



Months passed away—Waterloo was fought and won—and Ensign Malcolm was among those who fell.

When the death-list reached Scotland, many were the hearts it overpowered with grief; but Clara Douglas had more than one grief to mourn: sorrow and shame were too much to bear together, and she fled from the house where she had first met *him* who was the cause of all. None could tell whither she had gone. Her mother and sister were agonized, when the news of her disappearance reached them. Every search was made, but without effect. A year all but two weeks passed away, and still no tidings of her, till that very day, two boys seeking for pheasant's nests upon the top of a hillock overgrown with furze—which the old man pointed out to me at a short distance from the place where we stood—accidentally stumbled upon an object beneath a fir-tree. It was the remains of a female in a kneeling posture. Beneath her garments, by which she was recognised as Clara Douglas, not a vestige of flesh remained. There was still some upon her hands, which had been tightly clasped together; and upon her face, which leant upon them. Seemingly she had died in great agony. It was supposed by some that she had taken poison.

"If your time will permit," added the old man, as he wiped away a tear, "I will willingly show you the place where her remains were found. It is but a short distance. Come."

I followed the old man in silence. He led the way into a field. We climbed over some loose stones thrown together, to serve as a wall of division at the farther extremity of it, and slowly began to ascend the grassy acclivity, which was on both sides bordered by a thick hedge, placed apart, at the distance of about thirty feet. When half way up, I could not resist the inclination I felt to



turn and look upon the scene. It was an evening as fair as I had ever gazed on. The wheat was springing in the field through which we had just passed, covering it, as it were, with a rich green carpet. Trees and hills bounded the view, behind which the sun was on the point of sinking, and the red streaks upon the western sky "gave promise of a goodly day tomorrow."

"If, thought I, the hour on which Clara Douglas ascended this hill was as lovely as this evening, she must indeed have been deeply bent upon her own destruction, to look upon the world so beautifully fair, and not wish to return to it again. We continued our ascent, passing among thick tangled underwood, in whose kindly grasp the light flowing garments of Clara Douglas must have been ever and anon caught as she wended on her way. Yet had she disregarded the friendly interposition. Along the margin of an old stone quarry we now proceeded, where the pathway was so narrow that we were occasionally compelled to catch at the furze bushes which edged it, to prevent ourselves from falling over into the gulf beneath. And Clara Douglas, thought I, must have passed along here, and must have been exposed to the same danger of toppling headlong over the cliff, yet she had exerted herself to pass the fatal spot unharmed, to save a life which she knew would almost the instant afterwards be taken by her own hand. Such is the inconsistency of human nature.

Our course lay once more through the midst of underwood, so thickly grown that one would have supposed no female foot would dare to enter it.

"Here," cried the old man, stopping beside a dwarfish fir tree, "here is the spot where we found the mortal remains of Clara Douglas."

I pressed forward, and, to my surprise, beheld one other being than my old guide looking on the place. It was the



same I had noticed at the grave of Clara Douglas, within the walls of the ruined church of Altonby. I thought it a strange coincidence.

Summer passed away, winter and spring succeeded, and summer came again, and with it came the wish to see Mary once more. However much I had before doubted the truth of the axiom, that "absence makes the heart grow fonder," I now felt the full force of its truth. My affection for Mary was, day after day, becoming stronger; and, in spite of the dictates of prudence, my determination never to see her again began to falter; and one evening I unconsciously found myself in the yard of the Black Swan. Well, since I had come there at any rate, it would be exceedingly foolish to go away again without speaking to Mary; so I called to the stable boy to put up my horse. The boy knew me, for I had once given him a sixpence for running a message, and he came briskly forward at my first call, no doubt with some indistinct idea of receiving another sixpence at some no very distant date.

"Eh! Mr. Moir," said the boy, while I was dismounting, in answer to my question, "What news in the village?" "Ye'll no guess what's gaun to happen? Our Mary, the folk say, is gaun to be married!"

Our Mary! thought I, can *our* Mary be *my* Mary? and, to ascertain whether they were one and the same personage, I inquired of the boy who our Mary was.

"Ou!" replied he, "she's just bar-maid at the inn here."

I started, now that this disclosure had unhinged my doubts; and subduing, as well as I was able, my rising emotion, I boldly asked who was "the happy man."

"They ca' him a captain!" said the boy, innocently; "but whether he's a sea captain, an offisher in the army, or a captain o' police, I'm no that sure. At ony rate, he aye gangs aboot in plain claes. He's been staying for a month



here, an' he gangs oot but seldom, an' that only in the gloamin."

After thanking the boy, and placing the expected silver coin in his hand, I turned the corner of the house in my way towards the entrance, determined, with my own eyes and ears, to ascertain the truth of the boy's statement. The pace at which I was proceeding was so rapid, that, ere I was aware of the vicinity of any one, I came bump against the person of a gentleman, whom, to my surprise, I instantly recognised as the mysterious visitant to the grave of Clara Douglas, and to the spot where her relics were found. He seemed to regard me with a suspicious eye; for he shuffled past without uttering a word. His air was disordered, his step irregular, and his whole appearance was that of a man with whom care, and pain, and sorrow had long been familiar.

Can this be the captain? was the thought which first suggested itself to me. It was a question I could not answer; yet I entered the Black Swan, half persuaded that it was.

"Ah! Mr. Moir," cried Mary, coming forward to welcome me in her usual way, the moment she heard my voice, "you have been long a stranger. I fancied that, somehow or other, I was the cause of it, for you went away last time without bidding me good-by." I held her hand in mine, I saw her eyes sparkle, and the blush diffuse her cheek, and I muttered a confused apology. "Well! I am so glad to see you," she continued. "It was but yesterday I spoke of you to the captain."

"The captain," I repeated, while the pangs of jealousy, which had, during the last five minutes, been gradually lulled over to sleep, suddenly roused themselves. "Who is the captain, Mary?"

"Oh! I'm sure you will like him when you become acquainted with him," said she, blushing. "There is some-



thing so prepossessing about him, that really I defy any one not to like him." The animation with which she gave utterance to these words made me miserable, and I cursed the captain in my heart.

The next day passed over without my being able to obtain a sight of my rival; and, when I walked out in the afternoon, he had not yet risen. Mary's assigned reason for this was, that he was an invalid; but his was more the disease of the mind than of the body. In his memory there was implanted a deep sorrow, which time could never root out. In my walk, the churchyard and the venerable ruins of the church were visited—I stood again beside the grave of the hapless Clara Douglas, and her melancholy story afforded me a theme for sad reflection, which for a while banished Mary and all jealous fears from my mind.

It was evening when I reached "mine inn." On passing the parlour window, a sight met my eye which brought the colour to my cheeks. A tall, noble-looking man lay extended upon the sofa, while Mary leant over him in kindly solicitude, and, with marked assiduity, placed cushions for his head, and arranged his military cloak. This, then, must be the captain, and he and my mysterious friend were not the same. That was some consolation, however.

Thus as he lay, he held Mary's hand in his. My breast was racked with agony intense; for

"Oh! what a host of killing doubts and fears,  
Of melancholy musings, deep perplexities,  
Must the fond heart that yields itself to love,  
Struggle with and endure."

Once I determined on flying from the scene, and leaving my rival in undisputed possession of the village beauty; but, having been resolved that no woman should ever have it in her power to say she made me wretched, I screwed my



courage to the sticking place, and, on seeing Mary leave the parlour, I shortly afterwards entered it.

The stranger scarcely noticed my entrance, so intently was his attention fixed upon the perusal of a newspaper which he held in his hand. I sat down at the window, and, for want of something better to do, gazed with a scrutinizing eye upon the gambols of the ducks and geese outside.

After some time Mary came in to ask the captain what he would have for supper.

"This is the gentleman I spoke of," she said, directing her expressive glance towards me.

"Mr. Moir must pardon my inattention!" said the stranger, laying down the paper; "I was not aware that my pretty Mary's friend was in the room."

His urbane manner, his soft winning voice, made me feel an irresistible impulse to meet his advances. He proposed that we should sup together, and I sat down at the table with very different feelings from those which had been mine on entering the parlour that evening. I felt inclined to encourage an intimacy with the man whom, but a short while before, I had looked upon with aversion.

As the night wore on, I became more and more captivated with the stranger. His conversation was brilliant and intellectual; and, when we parted for the night, I began to find fault with myself for having for a moment harboured dislike towards so perfect a gentleman. I resolved to stay a few days longer at Altonby, for the purpose of improving our acquaintance. The stranger—or, as he was called at the inn, "the captain"—expressed delight when he was informed of my resolution; and, although he seldom rose before the afternoon, we spent many pleasant hours together.

On the evening of the third day of my sojourn, he expressed a wish that I would accompany him in a short



walk. Notwithstanding his erect and easy carriage, there was a feebleness in his gait, which he strove in vain to contend against; and it was but too evident that a broken spirit, added to a shattered constitution, would speedily bring him to his grave.

Leading the way into the churchyard, to my surprise he stopped at the resting-place of the ill-starred lady, the story of whose untimely end I had so patiently listened to the last time I visited Altonby.

“I am exceedingly fortunate,” said the captain, “in having met with one so kind as you, to cheer the last moments of my earthly pilgrimage. You smile—nay, I can assure you that I feel I am not long for this world. The object of my visit to this spot, to-night, is to ask you to do me the favour, when I am dead, of seeing my remains laid here—here, beside this grave, o’er which the grass grows longer than on those around;” and he pointed to the grave of Clara Douglas. After a moment, he continued:—“Unlike other men, you have never annoyed me by seeking to inquire of me, who or what I am; and, believe me, I feel grateful for it. I would not wish that you should ever know the history of the being who stands before you. When the earth closes over my coffin, think of him no more.”

Although the captain had done me the honour of calling me unlike other men—a distinction most folks are so exceedingly desirous of obtaining—I must own that I had hitherto felt no common degree of curiosity concerning him; and now that there was no prospect of it being gratified, its desire increased tenfold, and I would now have given worlds, if I had had them, to have learned something of the birth, parentage, and education of the captain.

“And now,” he added, “I beseech you, leave me for a short time—I would be alone.”



In silence I complied, sauntering outside the ruins, and seeking to find, in my old avocation of perusing the tombstones, the wherewithal to kill the time during which the captain held communion with the dead; for I could not help thinking that it was for such a cause he had desired to be left to himself.

Ten—twenty minutes passed, and the captain did not appear. I retraced my steps, and again entered the ruins, by the farther end. The gloom which prevailed around—the monuments which intervened—and, above all, the distance at which I then was from the grave of Clara Douglas—prevented me from descrying the captain. I had advanced a few paces when I heard voices in high altercation. I stopped; and, as I did so, one of the speakers, in whose clear intonation I could recognise the captain, said—"On my word, I returned here the instant my wounds were healed—I returned to marry her—and my grief could not be equalled by your's when I heard of her melancholy fate."

"Liar!" exclaimed the other; "you ne'er intended such. My sister's wrongs call out aloud for vengeance; and here—here, between her grave and that of our sainted mother—your blood shall be offered up in atonement."

This was instantly followed by the report of a pistol. I rushed forward, and beheld, O horror! the captain stretched upon the ground, and the blood streaming from a wound in his breast. I caught a glimpse of his assassin, as he fled from the church; it was the stranger whom I had seen, on a former visit, at the grave of Clara Douglas, and beside the fir-tree where her remains had been found. I made a motion to follow him, but the captain waved me back—"Let him go," said he; "I forgive him. I have no wish that he should die upon the scaffold." So saying, he fell back exhausted; and, in my haste to procure assistance for him, I quite forgot the assassin, until it was too late.



The captain was conveyed to the Black Swan, where, with Mary to attend his every want, he was, no doubt, as comfortable as if he had had a home to go to, and a beloved wife to smooth his dying pillow. Mary bestowed more than ordinary care and attention upon him, which, although she had declared to me that she could never love the captain so well as to marry him, should he ever condescend to make the offer, brought back occasionally a pang of jealousy to my heart. I could not exactly understand the extent of her regard for him.

Having business to transact at a neighbouring town, I left Altonby the next day, with a determination to return, ere the lapse of a week, to see the captain, I feared for the last time. I had been but two days gone, when I received a note from Mary, informing me that he was daily becoming worse, and that it was the fear of his medical attendant that he could not live four-and-twenty hours. With the utmost speed, I therefore hastened back to the Black Swan, where, indeed, I saw that the surgeon had had quite sufficient reason for his prediction—the captain was greatly altered since I last saw him. Wan and emaciated, he lay in resignation upon his couch, calmly waiting the approach of death. He seemed quite composed.

Taking my hand in his, he reminded me of his wish regarding his burial-place. I assured him that it should strictly be complied with. A smile lighted up his pale countenance for an instant, as I pledged myself to this. He then drew from under his pillow a parcel of letters, tied together with a faded ribbon, and desired me to consign them, one by one to the flames. With an eager eye, and a countenance full of excitement, did he watch them as they consumed away. I did not dare to examine minutely the address on the letters, but, from the glance I had of them, I could see they were all written in an elegant female hand. When all were gone—“And this,” said he, “is like



to human life—a blaze but for an instant, and then all is ashes.” He paused, and then continued, as he held a small packet in his hand, more in soliloquy than if he were addressing me—“Here is the last sad relic I possess—shall I?—Yes! yes! it shall go as the others have gone. How soon may I follow it?” He stretched forth his hand towards me. I took the packet. Instantly, as if the last tie which bound him to the earth had been hastily snapped asunder, the captain fell backwards upon his couch. I thrust the packet into my bosom, and ran to afford him assistance. He was beyond human help—he was dead!

The grief of Mary knew no bounds when the dismal tidings were conveyed to her; she was like one distracted. Mine was more chastened and subdued.

The remains of the captain were duly consigned to that spot of earth he had pointed out to me. After his death, there was found a conveyance of all his property, which was pretty considerable, to Mary, accompanied with a wish that I would marry her. To this arrangement Mary was quite agreeable; and accordingly, our nuptials were solemnized in about six months after the death of the captain. It was then that Mary confided to me that she was the sister of Clara Douglas; but when I made inquiry at her concerning the nature of her attachment to the captain, she always avoided answering, and seemed not to wish that his name should be mentioned in her hearing.

Several years passed, and I had forgotten all about the packet which the captain on his death-bed had placed in my hand, till one day, in looking for something else, which, of course, I could not find—(no one ever finds what he wants)—I accidentally stumbled upon the packet. Curiosity induced me to open it. A lock of black hair, tied with a piece of light-blue ribbon, and a letter, were its contents. Part of the letter ran thus:—“Enclosed is some of my hair—I don’t expect you to keep it, for I have heard



you say you did not like to have any such thing in your possession. I will not *ask* you, lest I might be refused ; but if you give me some, I'll get it put into one of my rings, and shall never, never part with it." This letter bore the signature of Clara Douglas !

Here, then, was a solution of all the mystery. The captain was the lover of Clara, and this had been the cause of Mary's intimacy with him.

Of the fate of the brother I afterwards heard. He was killed in a street brawl one night in Paris, and Mary never knew that he was the assassin of the captain.



## THE FAIR.

YOU may smile, reader, at the idea of a story entitled—THE FAIR; but read on, and you may find it an appropriate title to a touching, though simple tale. This may seem like the writer's praising his own production—but that is neither here nor there amongst authors—it is done every day; and not amongst authors only, but amongst all trades, crafts, and professions. If a man does not speak well of his own wares, whom does he expect to do it for him, when every person is busy selling wares of his own? You know the saying—"He's a silly gardener that lichtlies his ain leeks." But to go on with THE FAIR. On a Fair day, nature always turns out hundreds of her best human specimens of unsophisticated workmanship. Did you ever examine the countenances of a rustic group around a stall covered with oranges and sweetmeats—a bevy of rustic beauties, besieging the heart and the pockets of a rural bachelor of two-and-twenty? The colour of one countenance is deep and various as the rainbow—a second emulates the rose—a third the carnation—while the face of a fourth, who is deemed the old maid of her companions, is sallow as a daffodil after a north wind. There blue eyes woo, and dark eyes glance affection, and ruby lips open with the jocund laugh; and there, too, you may trace the workings of jealousy, rivalry, and envy, and other passions less gentle than love, according as the oranges and gingerbread happen to be divided amongst the fair recipients. You, too, have heard the drum beat for glory, and the shrill note of the fife ring through the streets, while a portly sergeant, with a sword bright as a sunbeam, and unsheathed in his hand, flaunted his smart cockade, or belike shook a well



lined purse as he marched along, or, halting at intervals, shook it again, while he harangued the gaping crowd—"Now, my lads—now is the time for fortune and glory! There, by Jupiter! there is the look—the shoulders—the limbs—the gait of a captain at least! Join us, my noble fellow, and your fortune is made—your promotion is certain! God save the King! Down with the French!"—"Down wi' them!" cries a young countryman, flushed with "the barley bree," and, borrowing the sword of the sergeant, waves it uncouthly round his head—feels himself a hero—a Sampson—a Cæsar—all the glories of Napoleon seem extinguished beneath his sword arm. "Down wi' them!" he cries again more vehemently, and again—"Hurra for the life of a sodger!"—and the next moment the ribbon streams from his Sunday hat. On such incidents turns our present story.

Willie Forbes was a hind in Berwickshire. He was also the only child and the sole support of a widowed mother, and she loved him as the soul loveth the hope of immortality; for Willie was a dutiful son and a kind one, and, withal, one of whom many mothers in Scotland might have been proud; for his person was goodly as his heart was affectionate; and often as his mother surveyed his stately figure, she thought to herself—as a mother will—that "there wasna a marrow to her Willie in a' braid Scotland." Now, it chanced that, before Willie had completed his twenty-third year, they were "in need of a bit lassie," as his mother said, "to keep up the bondage." Willie, therefore, went to Dunse hiring, to engage a servant; but, as fate would have it, he seemed to fix upon the most unlikely maiden for field-work in the market. At a corner of the market-place, as if afraid to enter the crowd, stood a lovely girl of about eighteen. Her name was Menie Morrison. "Are ye for hiring the day, hinny?" said Willie, kindly. "Yes," was the low and faltering



reply. "And what place was ye at last?" "I never was in service," said she; and as she said this, she faltered more. "An' where does your father live—what is he?" continued Willie. "He is dead," answered Menie, with a sigh. Willie paused for a few moments, and added—"And your mother?" "Dead, too!" replied the maiden; and tears gushed into her eyes. "Puir thing! puir thing!" said Willie; "weel, I'm sure I dinna ken what to say till't." "You may look at this," said she; and she put into his hands a slip of paper. It was her character from the minister of the parish where she had been brought up. "That's very excellent," said Willie, returning the paper; "very satisfactory—very, indeed. But—can ye—can ye hoe?" added he, hesitatingly. "Not well," answered she. "I like that, that's honest," added he; "hoein's easy learned. Can ye milk a cow?" "No," she replied. "That's a pity," returned Willie. But he looked again in her face; he saw the tear still there. It was like the sun gilding a summer cloud after a shower—it rendered her face more beautiful. "Weel, it's nae great matter," added he; my mother can learn ye." And Willie Forbes hired Menie Morrison through his heart. In a short time, Menie became an excellent servant. Willie and his mother called her—"our Menie." She loved her as a daughter, he as a man loveth the wife of his bosom; and Menie loved both in return. She had been two years in their service, and the wedding-day of Menie and Willie was to be in three months. For a few weeks, Willie, from his character and abilities, had been appointed farm-steward. He looked forward to the day when he should be able to take a farm of his own, and Menie would be the mistress of it.

But Berwick Fair came—Willie had a cow to sell, and Menie was to accompany him to the fair. Now, the cow was sold, and Willie was "gallanting" Menie and three or four of her companions about the streets. He could not



do less than bestow a fairing upon each ; and he led them to a booth where the usual luxuries of a fair were spread out. At the booth, Willie found his master's daughter with some of her own acquaintances. She was dressed more gaily than Menie Morrison, and her face was also fair to look upon, but it wanted the soul, the charm that glowed in the countenance of the humble orphan. It had long been whispered about the farm-stead, and at the farm-steads around it, that "Miss Jean was fond o' Willie Forbes ;" and some even said that it was through her partiality he obtained his stewardship. Menie had heard this, and it troubled her ; for more easily than a breath moves the down on the thistle, will a word move the breast of a woman that loves. Miss Jean accosted the young steward for her fairing. "Ye shall hae that," said Willie, "but there's naething guid enough here for the like o' *you*—come awa to ane o' the shops." So saying, he disengaged his arm from Menie Morrison's, and without thinking of what he did, offered it to his master's daughter, and left Menie and her friends at the booth. Poor Menie stood motionless, a mist seemed to gather before her eyes, and the crowd passed before her as a dream. "Ye see how it is," observed her companions ; "*naething here guid enough for her!*—if ye speak to him again, Menie, ye deserve to beg on the causie !" Her pride was wounded—her heart was touched—a cloud fell upon her affections. Such is human nature that it frequently happens revenge and love are at each other's elbows.

Now, Menie was not without other admirers ; and it so happened that one of these, who had more pretensions to this world's goods than Willie Forbes, came up at the moment, while her bosom was struggling with bitter feelings. For the first time Menie turned not away at his approach. He was more liberal in his fairings than Willie could have been. As the custom then was, and in some instances still



is, there were the sounds of music and dancing. Willie's rival pressed Menie and her companions to "step up and hae a reel." They complied, and she accompanied them, scarce knowing what she did.

In a few minutes Willie returned to the booth, but Menie was not there. His eyes wandered among the crowd—he walked up and down the streets, but he found her not. Something told him he had done wrong—he had slighted Menie. At length a "good-natured friend" informed him she was dancing with young Laird Lister. The intelligence was wormwood to his spirit. He hastened to the dancing-room, and there he beheld Menie, "the observed of all observers," gliding among her rustic companions lightly as you have seen a butterfly kiss a flower. For a moment and he was proud to look upon her as the queen of the room; but he saw his rival hand her to a seat and his blood boiled. He approached her. She returned his salutation with a cold glance. Another reel had been danced—Willie offered her his hand for her partner in the next. "I'm engaged," said the hitherto gentle Menie; "but maybe Miss Jean will hae nae objections—if *there's ony-thing guid enough for her here.*" At that moment, Willie's rival put his arm through Menie's—she stood by his side—the music struck up, and away they glided through the winding dance! Willie uttered a short, desperate oath, which we dare not write, and hurried from the room. But scarce had he left, till confusion and a sickness of heart came upon Menie. She went wrong in the dance—she stood still—her bosom heaved to bursting—she uttered a cry, and fell upon the floor.

She, in her turn, felt that she had done wrong, and, on recovering, left her companions, and returned home alone. She doubted not but Willie was there before her. The road seemed longer than it had ever done before; for her heart was heavy. She reached his mother's cottage. She



listened at the door—she heard not Willie's voice; and she trembled she knew not why. She entered. The old woman rose to meet her. "Weel, hinny," said she, "hae ye got back again? What sort o' a fair has there been? Where is Willie?" Menie turned towards the bink, to lay aside her bonnet, and was silent. "What's the matter wi' ye, bairn?" continued the old woman; "is Willie no wi' ye; where is he?" "He is comin', I *fancy*," returned Menie; and she sobbed as she spoke. "Bairn! bairn! there's something no richt," cried the mother, "between ye. Some foolish quarrel, I warrant. But tell me what he's done; and for sending my Menie hame greetin', I'll gie him a hamecomin'!" "No, no, it wasna Willie's wtye," replied Menie, "it was mine—it was a' mine. But dinna be angry." And here the maiden unbosomed her grief, and the old woman took part with her, saying—"Son as he's mine, ye just served him as he deserved, Menie." Her heart grew lighter as her story was told, and they sat by the window together watching one party after another return from the fair. But Willie was not amongst them; and as it began to wax late, and acquaintances passed, Menie ran to inquire of them if they had seen anything of Willie; and they shook their heads and said, "No." And it grew later and later, till the last party who left the fair had passed, singing as they went along; but still there were no tidings of Willie. Midnight came, and the morning came, but he came not. His mother became miserable, and, in the bitterness of her heart, she upbraided Menie, and Menie wept the more. They sat watching through the night and through the morning, listening to every sound. They heard the lark begin his song, the poultry leap from their roost, the cows low on the milk-maidens, and the ploughman prepare for the field; yet Willie made not his appearance. Time grew on till mid-day, and the misery of the mother and of Menie increased. The latter



was still dressed in the apparel she had worn on the previous day, and the former throwing on her Sunday gown, they proceeded to the town together to seek for him. They inquired as they went along, and from one they received the information, "I thought I saw him wi' the sodgers in the afternoon." The words were as if a lightning had fallen on Menie's heart—his mother wrung her hands in agony, and cried, "My ruined bairn!" And she cast a look on poor Menie that had more meaning than kindness in it.

They reached the town, and as they reached it, a vessel was drawing from the quay—she had recruits on board, who were to be landed at Chatham, from whence they were to be shipped to India. Amongst those recruits was Willie Forbes. When he rushed in madness from the dancing-room, he met a recruiting party on the street—he accompanied them to their quarters—he drank with them—out of madness and revenge he drank—he enlisted—he drank again—his indignation kindled against Menie and against his rival—he again swore at the remembrance of her refusing him her hand—he drank deeper—his parent was forgotten—he took the bounty—he was sworn in—and while the fumes of the liquor yet raged in his brain, maddening him on and drowning reflection, he was next day embarked for Chatham. The vessel had not sailed twenty yards from the quay—Willie and his companions were waving their hats, and giving three cheers as they pulled off—when two women rushed along the quay. The elder stretched out her arms to the vessel; she cried wildly, "Gie me back my bairn!—Willie! Willie Forbes!" He heard her screams above the huzza of the recruits—he knew his mother's voice—he saw his Menie's dishevelled hair; the poisonous drink died within him—his hat dropped from his hand—he sprang upon the side of the vessel—he was about to plunge into the river, when he was seized by the soldiers and dragged below. A shriek rang from his mother and



from Menie; those who stood around them tried to comfort and pity them; and, by all but themselves, in a few days the circumstance was forgotten.

“Who will provide for me now, when my Willie is gane?” mourned the disconsolate widow, when the first days of her grief had passed. “I will,” answered Menie Morrison; “and your home shall be my home, and my bread your bread, and the Husband o’ the widow, and the Father o’ the orphan, will bring our Willie back again.” The old woman pressed her to her breast, and called her “her mair than daughter.” They left the farm-stead, and rented a very small cottage at some miles’ distance, and there, to provide for her adopted mother, Menie kept two cows; and, in the neighbouring markets, her butter was first sold, and her poultry brought the best price. But she toiled in the harvest-field—she sewed, she knitted, she span—she was the laundress of the gentry in the neighbourhood—she was beloved of all, and nothing came wrong to bonny Menie Morrison. Four years had passed, and they had twice heard from Willie, who had obtained the rank of sergeant. But the fifth year had begun, and, from a family in the neighbourhood, Menie had received several newspapers, that, as she said, she “might read to her mother what was gaun on at the wars.” She was reading an account of one of the first victories of Wellington in the east, and she passed on to what was entitled a GALLANT EXPLOIT. Her voice suddenly faltered—the paper shook in her hands. “What is’t—oh! what is’t, Menie?” cried the old woman; “is’t onything aboot Willie?—My bairn’s no dead?” Menie could not reply; she pressed her hands before her eyes and wept aloud. “My son! my son!” exclaimed the wretched widow—“oh! is my bairn dead?” The paragraph which had filled Menie with anguish, stated that a daring assault had been led on by Sergeant Forbes of the 21st, after his superiors had fallen; but that



*he also fell mortally wounded in the moment of victory.* I will not attempt to paint their sorrow. Menie put on the garments of widowhood for Willie, and she mourned for him not only many but every day. He had fallen in the arms of glory, yet she accused herself as his murderer.

Five years more had passed. It was March; but the snow lay upon the ground, and the face of the roads was as glass. A stranger gentleman had been thrown from his horse in the neighbourhood of the widow's cottage. His life had been endangered by the fall, and he was conveyed beneath her lowly roof, where he remained for weeks, unable to be removed. He was about fifty or sixty years of age, and his dress and appearance indicated the military officer. Menie was his nurse; and if her beauty and kindness did not inspire the soul of the veteran with love, they moved it with sympathy. He wished to make her a return, and, at length, resolved that that return should be an offer of his hand. He knew he was in his "sere and yellow leaf," and his face was marked with wounds; but for those wounds he had a pension; he had his half-pay as Major, and three thousand pounds in the funds. He would show his gratitude by tendering his hand and fortune to the village maiden. He made known his proposal to the old woman—maternal feeling suggested her first reply: "She was to be my Willie's wife," said she, ruefully, and wiped away a tear; "she was to be my daughter—and she is my daughter; I canna part with my Menie." But prudence at length prevailed, and she added: "But why should she be buried for me? No, sir, I winna wrang her; ye are owre kind—yet she deserves it a', an' I will advise her as though she had been my ain bairn." But Menie refused to listen to them.

When the sun began to grow warm in the heavens, a chair was brought to the door for the invalid, and Menie and her mother would sit spinning by his side, while he



would recount his "battles, sieges, fortunes." And thus, in an evening in May, as the sun was descending on the hills, ran his story: "Fifty of us were made prisoners. We were chained man to man, and cast into a dark, narrow, and damp dungeon. Our only food was a scanty handful of rice, and a cup of water once in twenty-four hours. Death, in mercy, thinned our numbers. A worse than plague raged amongst us—our dead comrades lay amongst our feet. The living lay chained to a corpse. All died but myself and my companion to whom I was fettered. He cheered me in fever and sickness. He took the water from his parched lips and held it to mine. And, maiden, I have been interested in you for his sake; for in his sleep he would start, and mention the name of Menie!"

"Oh, sir!" interrupted Menie and the old woman as once, "what—what was his name?"

"If the world were mine, I would give it to know," replied the Major, and continued: "He succeeded in breaking our fetters. We were left unguarded. 'Let us fly,' said he; but I was unable to follow him. He took me upon his shoulders. It was midnight. He bore me to the woods. For five days he carried me along, or supported me on his arm, till we were within sight of the British lines. There a party of native horsemen came upon us. My deliverer, with no weapon but a branch which he had torn from a tree, defended himself like a lion in its desert. But he fell wounded, and was taken prisoner. A company of our troops came to our assistance; I was rescued, but my noble deliverer was borne again into the interior; and three years have passed, and I have heard no more of him."

"But it is five years since my Willie fell," sighed Menie, Morrison. Yet she brooded on the word—*Menie*.

A wayfaring man was seen approaching the cottage. As he drew near, the eyes of the Major glistened—his lips



moved—he threw down his crutch. He started, unaided, to his feet—“Gracious Heaven!—it is himself!” he exclaimed; “my companion!—my deliverer!”

The stranger rushed forward with open arms—“Menie!—mother!” he cried, and speech failed him. It was Willie Forbes! Menie was on his bosom—his mother’s arms were round his neck—the old Major grasped his hand. Reader, need I tell you more. Willie Forbes had fallen wounded, as was thought, mortally; but he had recovered. He had been made a prisoner. He had returned. Menie gave him her hand. The Major procured his discharge, and made him his heir. He took a farm; and on that farm the Major dwelt with them, and “fought his battles o’er again,” to the children of Willie and Menie Forbes.



## THE SLAVE.

SOME of the inhabitants of Edinburgh, who, some years since, were in the habit of enjoying the pure air and delightful prospects which the head of Burntsfield Links and the Burghmuirhead afford, may remember the person of whose eventful life I am about to narrate a few passages. He was a square-built, thick-set old man, short in stature, with a weather-beaten countenance; which, though harsh in its expression at the first glance, exhibited, in conversation, all the traits of a mind influenced by humane sentiments and benevolent feelings. He was often to be seen standing near the wells, at the south border of the Links, where the females bleach their linen; gazing steadfastly upon them, his rough features in continued change, as if some inward feelings completely engrossed his whole faculties, and indulging in frequent mutterings, as if the occupations of those whose motions he was observing had roused some latent thoughts that had been laid up in his memory in former years. When I saw him first, he was busy looking at a few sprightly young females, whose loud laugh enlivened the scene of the bleaching-ground, as they were splashing the water on each other in merriment. His features had something fearful in them. Anger flashed from his dark blue eyes, his shaggy eyebrows which covered them were knit, his teeth were compressed; and such unaccountable passion I had never seen so fearfully expressed. I almost shrunk from him; yet curiosity detained me, and I saw his features gradually relax, and a languid smile succeed his fearful frown. The change was as unaccountable as the contrast was striking, and I could scarcely believe that I still looked upon the same individual. The circum-



stance prejudiced me against him; for I attributed his fixed gaze upon the females to a cause very different from the true one; though why he should frown upon them I was still at a greater loss to understand. I saw him every day on the golfing ground; I wished for no intercourse with him, though there was a strange anxiety in my mind to know more of him; and, often as I followed the game we were busily engaged in, my eyes would involuntarily turn to where he stood or walked; and so habituated did I become to his presence that, when he was absent, I felt as if all was not as it used to be on the golfing ground. No one of whom I made inquiries knew aught of him; all I could learn was, that he was known by the name of the Captain, and had a black servant, who, with an aged female, constituted his whole household at Morningside, where he resided in one of those small self-contained villas in that retreat.

One morning towards the end of September, I was up rather earlier than usual, as I had engaged to accompany some friends upon a small party of pleasure; and, taking a turn, I had sauntered down past Merchiston Castle, to see how the reapers were getting on with their labour in the harvest-fields. There I met the identical Captain, the subject of my curiosity, coming up the road, accompanied by a female, who leant upon his right arm as if she walked with difficulty; while in his left he carried a young child, whose head lay upon his broad shoulder, pillowed as if asleep, or depressed with sickness; and his black servant, who bore a considerable burden, walked by their side. The female was evidently poor, but neat and clean; and her features were pale as death, with an expression of sickness and languor which roused my sympathy with my approbation of the Captain's benevolence—for I was satisfied he was engaged in an act of charity.

“Billy,” I heard him say, “you had as well go on



before, and tell Mary to make all ready for our arrival. Poor thing!—she is a sailor's wife, and one of us."

"Yes, Massa, I do so—gladly do so," replied the negro. And away he moved from them, past me, with the bundle upon his arm; the smile that lit up his black face giving it, in my estimation, a look more interesting than I thought an African's could possess. The female looked gratefully at her supporter; and, as the Captain gazed first at her, then at her babe, I could see his clear blue eye glisten with tears—my own heart swelled, my bad impressions left me in a moment, and I could have put him in my bosom; I bowed to him with true reverence, as if I asked pardon for the injustice I had done him, and he looked at me as if he was gratified, and gently nodded his head—all the return he could make, so fully occupied was he with his benevolent labours.

"My good sir," said I, "since you seem to be engaged in a noble act, may I request to be allowed to lend my aid?"

"Certainly, with all my heart," replied he; "for I fear this good woman gets on but poorly with all the assistance I can give her."

"God bless you both," said the woman, as I gave her my arm, "for your kindness! Oh, my baby!—my poor baby, I fear, has got his death in the cold of this miserable night. My husband! little did you think that your Peggy was so near, and exposed to the bare heavens, sick and houseless, or you would have come to her help."

I requested her not to exert herself; and, as we proceeded, I learned that the Captain and Billy, having been out early, had found the female and child in the middle of a group of reapers, who had discovered her at the entrance of the field, chilled, and almost deprived of sense, with the infant wrapped up in her bosom; and they had in part restored her to some faint degree of consciousness when



the Captain arrived, and took the whole charge upon himself and his servant. The negro had used all the expedition in his power, and met us before we reached the house.

“Massa,” said he, “you give me the piccaninny—I carry it, if you please.”

“The child opened its languid eyes as he laid hold of it; and, looking in the negro’s face, screamed with fright, leaned towards its mother, (who soothed it with her voice, in vain,) and nestled once more upon the Captain’s shoulder, clasping its little arms friendly round his neck.

“Let him remain, Billy,” said he; “I think the young one loves me.”

In a few minutes we reached the house, where Mary received the female and child with all a mother’s care, while the Captain and I looked on with feelings of satisfaction. I bade him adieu, promising to call in the evening. The day on which I had anticipated to be so happy, hung rather heavy upon my hands than otherwise; and I longed much for an interview with the Captain, expecting, when an intimacy was established, to be much amused with his conversation, as, from his appearance, he was no common character, and he had already roused my curiosity, by some broken hints of his adventures. I waited upon him, and found the female much restored, and the negro nursing the child, who appeared as much pleased with his nurse as he had been alarmed in the morning. After the first compliments were exchanged, I learned that the woman was the wife of a sailor, and on her way to Leith, to join him. She had journeyed on foot from Lanark, where she had been living with her mother during the time he had been on a voyage to the South Seas. Having got accounts of his arrival in London, and his being to be in Leith, where he had got a berth in one of the Leith and London smacks, and where he wished her to come and reside, she had set out, but come off her road to visit a



relation she had, who resided in Colinton, and with whom she had intended to stay during the night; but, unfortunately, she found that her relation had been dead for some weeks. The shock and grief had a great effect upon her; and, having no other acquaintance in the place, she had resolved to proceed to Edinburgh, as she calculated there was sufficient time for her to do so before it would be dark, and the weather was delightful. Oppressed with her bundle, and sunk by her grief, she had plodded on, in hopes of soon meeting the husband of her love; yet still her progress was slow, and the sun had set for some time, and the shades of evening had begun to thicken, ere she reached Craig-Lockhart; but the spires of the distant city began to rise in view, and she hoped soon to see the end of her toil, when, from over-exertion, or some other cause, she became sick and faint—her limbs bent beneath her—and with difficulty she made her way to a gate, to be off the roadside, in hopes that the attacks would soon go off, and she would resume her way. She fainted; and, when she came to her senses again, her babe was crying piteously upon her bosom. It was completely dark; and, after stilling the child, she in vain attempted to rise and resume her journey. It was far beyond her strength; and fear, bordering on despair, took possession of her mind. It was very chill; and, covering her infant in the best manner she could from the cold, she, almost without hope, commended herself to God, and, weeping, resigned herself calmly to her fate. She never expected to survive until the morning. The tedious hours rolled on, she knew not how—her child slept soundly, and her heart was in close communion with that merciful God who sustained her in all this misery—until the voices of the reapers sounded upon her ears like heavenly music, and hope once more warmed her breast; yet she was, at their first coming up, so weak that she could scarcely speak—a symptom that sur-



prised her, for she was unconscious of her extreme exhaustion, and her heart was hale from the manner in which she had employed her thoughts during the cheerless hours.

This is almost the words of the poor creature, who now was able to move about, and expressed a wish to proceed to Leith—a step that would not be heard of by the Captain, who said he would not allow her to depart until he had ascertained that her husband had arrived; and the name of the smack in which he sailed having been ascertained, we looked into the newspapers for the arrivals and departures at Leith, and found that the *Czar* had not arrived. The grateful Margaret agreed to remain, to the delight of the negro, who appeared as fond of the child as if it had been his own. At the Captain's request, I agreed, with pleasure, to stay supper.

"How I do love black Billy!" said my host; "this is a new trait of him; he is bold as a lion, faithful as a dog, and yet mild as a lamb."

"Sir," said I, "you appear to have a great regard for your black servant; I believe, from what I see, he is worthy of it."

"He is not my servant," said he—"he is my friend; yet it would grieve him to see any one do any little office for me, besides himself. He is as humble as he is good; and if you knew his history and mine, you would not be surprised at what I now say of him."

"Nothing that I know of would give me more pleasure," replied I, "than to know a little more of him and his friend, would he be so kind as oblige me."

"With all my heart," replied the old man, "if you have the patience to hear me."

Supper was at this time brought in by Billy, and soon despatched, when we drew in our chairs, and, seated by the fireside, I felt as if I had been on intimate terms with him for many years.



“My name is William Robertson,” he began; “I am a native of Edinburgh, born within the sound of St. Giles’ bells. My parents were once in a respectable line of business; but they died when I was very young, leaving me to the care of my paternal uncle—for I was an only child. This uncle, who has long since rendered his account at that judgment-seat where we must all appear, took possession of all my father’s property, and became tutor to me. I was too young, at the time, to know my loss, but soon felt it in all its bitterness; for he used me very ill, so much so that I trembled at his voice. I was quite neglected, and allowed to ramble about as much as I pleased, amongst the other idle boys of the neighbourhood. I could read and write a little at the death of my parents, which was all the instruction I received. I was now nearly thirteen; and, as my uncle’s abuse became quite intolerable to me, I left the house, boy as I was, and entered on board a trader at Leith, which was on the point of sailing for America. The captain, who was one of the best of men, waited upon my uncle before we sailed; and, I believe, as much by threat of compulsion by law, as any entreaty he used, got from him a few necessaries for me—for, besides his other ill usage, he kept me miserably clad. The five years I sailed in the *Bounty* of Leith, were the happiest I had ever spent—for my kind master had me taught navigation, and everything necessary for a seamen to know; but, in the middle of this prosperity, when I was to have been made his mate next voyage, the American war broke out, and I was impressed as soon as our vessel cast anchor in Leith Roads. I was only grieved to be parted from my kind captain, who was as vexed to leave me—but in vain he applied to have me set at liberty; and, to be short, I served out the period of the war, and was in a good deal of service. The seventy-four I was in being on the West India station, I was not paid off for



some months after the peace. On arriving at Portsmouth, I followed the usual course of sailors ; and, having gone to amuse myself with some of my shipmates, I got robbed of all I had in the world ; and, when I came to my senses, I found I had not even a sixpence in my pocket, a shoe on my feet, or a hat on my head. I was thus in a strange place, quite destitute ; but I soon got a loan of some money from one of my comrades, who had been more prudent or more fortunate than myself, and set off for London to proceed to Leith. I learned there, from a Leith trader, that the *Bounty* had been taken by the French, and that my old captain had left going to sea ; so I gave up all thoughts of returning to Leith. Berths were at this time not to be obtained—the seamen were to be seen wandering upon the quays of every port, begging for employment in vain ; and thus, young and vigorous as I was, I was reduced to great want. In this dilemma, I thought of writing to my uncle—being advised by one of my acquaintances, who knew much more of the world than I did, to do so, and threaten to call him to account for his intromissions with my father's effects, if he did not send me, by return of post, a few pounds for my immediate wants. I waited most anxiously for an answer, which I duly received ; but it brought me no supply, and I learned that he had been for a long time bankrupt, and was at this time, if possible, in greater want than myself. In a day or two after, I got a berth in a Bristol trader, whose master was an old messmate of mine, and who having told me I had a better chance in Bristol than in London, I cheerfully made the run ; but I found berths as difficult to be obtained there as in London ; and, in this desperate state of my affairs, I was persuaded to go a voyage to the coast of Africa, in a slaving ship—a species of employment that no seaman will engage in if he can do better. The men are in general not well used ; and the



danger is great as regards life, both from fatigue and the climate. You must not judge of me by this voyage; for the slave trade was then as legitimate as any other branch of commerce, and much the same, for popularity or unpopularity, as it is in America at the present time."

"I don't think harshly of you on this account," replied I; "I only beg you to be as circumstantial as you can regarding this inhuman branch of traffic, now so happily destroyed by the unwearied efforts of Christian benevolence."

"To proceed, the vessel lay at King's Road, waiting my arrival on board, to overhaul her stores, to see what might be wanting. Her name was the *Queen Charlotte*; she mounted twenty-two guns; her captain was called by the seamen the Gallipot Captain, as he had formerly been doctor on board the same vessel, and, her captain having died in her last voyage, he was now the commander, in consequence of having brought her home. I went on board in the captain's boat, which was waiting for me, and to my great joy, found an old messmate who had sailed in the *Exeter* man-of-war with me. He was now second-mate of the *Queen Charlotte*, and I was engaged as boatswain. We were soon ready for sea; and unmoored about eight o'clock, the wind chopping about to the east. The captain and pilot came on board through the night, and we set sail for the African coast on the morning of the 1st of May, 1788. We passed the island of Madeira on the 8th of the month; and having got beyond the Canary and Cape de Verd islands, all became bustle on board, making preparations for the coast; the carpenters fitting up barricades to keep the male and female slaves apart, and the cooper getting ready all the tubs and vessels for their use. Though in anticipation, I may say that the males are never allowed to see the females until they are put on shore. The children are with the women, in general; but



are at times allowed to run at large all over the ship; and merry little creatures they are, and soon pick up a number of English words. The first land we made was Cape Palmas. Still steering along the coast, keeping a good offing, until we passed Cape Three Points and Cape Coast Castle, we crossed the Bight of Benin, and made the land again, which is so low that you can scarce distinguish it from the water—the tall palms resembling a large fleet of ships. The weather was so thick and hazy that we lay at the Bar five days before we could venture in—the tide running so strong, at full moon, that it is with difficulty the boats can pull against it. Upon our getting up, we found about thirty sail of large ships, some of them fitted up for one thousand slaves, all (save a few completely slaved) waiting for cargoes, several with none on board, and others half-full. There was one sad memento of the unhealthiness of this vile place which made a deep impression on me, thoughtless as I was. There was a beautiful French ship lying at anchor off the town, without one single person alive on board that had come out in her from Europe—captain, doctor, and all had died; and the agent had written to the owners to send out a new crew, either to complete the voyage or carry her back to France. This was a sad sight for us; and we all heartily wished ourselves safe out of a place where never a day passed without two, three, or more European sailors being rowed on shore, from the ships, to be buried. I shall not wound your feelings by all the details of this disgusting traffic. We longed much for King Peppel, the sovereign of the place, to come on board, to break trade, as it is called; for no native merchant dare either to buy or sell until he has got his ‘dash’ or present, and made his selection of the goods that are on board, at the same time that he fixes the prices himself. At times his Majesty is very backward, and a long time elapses before he comes on board—for he is as cunning and



political as any European statesman that ever penned a protocol; but the captain, who had been often here before, knew well the customs of the place, and how to entice him quickly to his wishes. In the morning, after we were all prepared, he sent his boat to the town, under the command of the mate, who carried a private 'dash' for his Majesty, consisting of a blue uniform, all covered with gold lace, so stiff that it would scarcely fold. This had the desired effect; for the answer was, that he would visit the *Queen Charlotte* next day—and this was the ninth since our arrival.

"In the morning all was again bustle, preparing for a sumptuous dinner for the king, in which there behoved not to be forgot a huge plum-pudding, and a roast pig, two dishes upon which depend the good or ill humour of his Majesty; and the larger the fragments are, the better is his humour, as all that is not consumed at the time is taken ashore with him. It was necessary that everything of value should be carefully put out of sight; for the moment it attracts the attention of the king, he will immediately ask for it, and never cease to importune until he has obtained it. There is no use in refusing, if you mean to trade; and all you can do, is to make the best terms for yourself you can, on the principle of present for present.

"About eleven o'clock, we heard from the shore a confused sound of drums and horns; and, soon after, the royal canoe, formed of one single tree, put off in great state, with nearly one hundred men paddling her along, her colours flying, and about a dozen of musicians in her bow, some blowing upon antelopes' horns, others beating upon drums and other things, and the remainder chanting or singing in a voice as melodious as the horns and drums. His Majesty sat upon a platform, in an arm-chair, in the centre of the canoe, surrounded by his favourites, all of whom he invites to his feasts. They were dressed agreeably to



their tastes—his Majesty's uniform consisting of a cocked hat, a blue laced coat and red vest, with a shirt ruffled at breast and wristbands, and about six or seven yards of calico wrapped round his loins; while his legs and feet were wrapped in flannel, as he was at this time suffering from gout. He appeared to be about fifty years of age, portly in his appearance, but extremely fat. When he was hoisted upon deck, his attendants carried him, chair and all, into the cabin, where they passed a jovial afternoon, and matters were arranged to the satisfaction of all parties. The king had seven puncheons of brandy, and other articles in the same proportion, for his dash; which was immediately put on shore.

“Next forenoon, our decks were crowded by the native merchants, bargaining for the cargo, which was soon arranged, and the half of the value paid in advance—a custom rendered necessary, from the traders not having the slaves in the town, but being obliged to go up the river to purchase them at the new moon. This being in a few days, we had to wait patiently. On the night before they set out, the sound of drums and horns never ceased, while parties with lighted torches were to be seen all along the beach, down to the water's edge, placing offerings of fowls, manilla, and dried fish, upon stakes, for the use of their jew-jew or god, that he might give them a prosperous voyage. The object of their worship is the guana, a creature having much the same appearance as the alligator, but smaller; and so completely domesticated that they go out and in to the huts at pleasure. Indeed, the natives build huts for them, where victuals are regularly placed every day.

“On the morning, they set off with their canoes loaded deep with goods, and well armed. Of the proceeds of this expedition we only got twenty slaves, with assurance that our cargo would be completed next trip, as they had made arrangements up the country for more. Of those we re-



ceived at this time, all had to get their hurts fomented and dressed, so much had they been injured, from the manner in which they had been secured by the traders; and it was some days before they were completely recovered. The gyves we put on did not gall the ankles, while they were secure; but their greatest inconvenience was that, on whatever occasion one had to move, the companion of his chain had to accompany him. During our tedious stay, it was my duty often to go to King Peppel's town for water, and there I recollect well, I met a handsome young female slave, who used to weep much, and importune me, in Negro English, to purchase and carry her to the West Indies with me. I was much surprised at this request, for the blacks are in general very averse to leave the country; and having made inquiry into her history, found it to be most cruel. I never was so sorry for a slave as I was for that young creature. She had been taken captive at the surprisal and plunder of her native town—her husband having escaped—and, being heavy with child, had been delivered on her way to the coast, where she and her infant were shipped for the West Indies. In the voyage out, the captain having taken a fancy to her person, kept her in his cabin, and did not sell her, but brought her again to Bonny, where he had come for a new cargo. It so happened that her husband had, like herself, been reduced to slavery, and was brought on board the very ship in which she was. Her feelings may more easily be conceived than described. Neither flattery nor punishment could make her comply with the captain's wishes; and he was so provoked, that he exchanged her for another slave with King Peppel, who had passed his word never to sell her to any one of the European traders. Her husband and child were meanwhile carried away, and she was left behind, to linger out a life of hopeless grief.

“Let me hasten to leave this horrible place. I could



make your heart sick by relating a hundredth part of what I was forced to witness. As to what happened in our own ship, I cannot avoid. After next new moon, we received the remainder of our cargo—four hundred slaves, male and female. The receiving them on board is the most heart-breaking and disagreeable part of the whole of a slaving voyage. When they come first on board, extreme terror is expressed in every feature; and their tears and groans while being put in irons few hearts can withstand, even though hardened by two or three voyages. This was my first and last; I cursed my folly a thousand times, and would have rejoiced to have been a beggar in Scotland rather than where I was. The men are chained by the ancles, two and two, then placed within their own barricade; so that husband and wife, sister and brother, may be in the same ship, and not know of it. When they come first on board, many of them refuse to eat or drink, rather choosing to die than live, and thinking we only wish them to feed, that they may become fat and fit for our eating—a prejudice many of them firmly believe in, and founded on the notion that the whites are men-eaters, and purchase them to carry to market like bullocks. While this feeling is in their mind, which is called the sulky fit, there is much trouble with them. The men remain silent and sullen, the women weep and tremble. Arguments, could we speak the different tongues, would be of no avail—the cat is the only remedy; and that is administered until they comply. The sight of it, or a few strokes in general, is sufficient for the females; but many of the males will stand out a long time, and, during the flogging, never utter a groan—snapping their fingers in the face of their tormentors, and crying, ‘O Furrie! O Furrie!’ (Never mind!) always a sure token of their despair and recklessness. We were very fortunate in getting our cargo so soon. We had two or three visits of



King Peppel along-side in his begging disguise—and wished no more. His custom was to visit each ship, meanly dressed, and in a whining voice, equivalent to a demand, beseech an alms—and he never begged in vain, for the royal beggar always got a handsome present; and, indeed, the ultimate success of the voyage required this, in consequence of his unlimited power over his subjects.

“Having got on board the lime-juice and other necessities, all we required was the royal leave to depart; and at length his Majesty came on board, in as great state as at first—the same scene was acted over again—his parting-present was little inferior to the former, the difference being, that this was called a farewell present, and was returned by a man slave, and two elephant’s teeth. The price of a prime male slave was, at this time, in Bonny, equal to an elephant’s tooth of sixty-five pounds weight, or one thousand billets of red wood—nearly £10 of English money.

“Next day we set sail for St. Vincent, to our great joy, having lain here exactly six weeks and one day. Both the crew and the slaves began to grow very sickly. The duties of the crew were very severe, and, as disease prevailed, these became more and more disagreeable. As you seem interested, I will give you a faint, unconnected sketch of the run; but I would much rather pass it over, though the *Queen Charlotte* was remarked for her care and humanity to the slaves. To proceed:—

“Next morning, the negroes were forced upon deck, and the place where they had passed the night upon the bare boards, naked as they were born, was scrubbed with lime-juice, until every stain was removed. When upon deck, chained by the ankles, two and two, a strict watch behoved to be kept over them, to prevent them from throwing themselves overboard—a remedy for their sufferings they are keen to resort to for the first fortnight;



and, when the state of the weather would permit, the drum and fife being played, they were compelled to dance at least twice a day, to make their blood circulate, and promote their health. At these times, there was such a clanking of chains and stamping upon the decks, you would have thought they would have been beaten to pieces by them; and no wonder, when they were about two hundred lusty fellows, all in violent exercise at one time. At first the cat was forced to be employed; but they are very fond of the drum, and soon call of themselves for "jiggery-jigg," as they term it; will take the instruments themselves, beat their own time in their own way, and dance away in their own fashion.

'We had four or five different nations on board. Of one nation we had only twenty; and these we found were more than enough, from the trouble they gave us, forcing us to confine them by themselves, as all the other nations were afraid of them, and said they were men-eaters. These stood nearly six feet high, and stout in proportion; their teeth were ground to a point, and fitted into each other like a rat-trap; their nails were long and strong; they were sullen and untractable, and of consequence often flogged to make them eat, at which times their looks, as they snapped their fingers in your face, and growled 'O Furrie!' to one another, were horrible. In vain was all our care and attention to them, and every indulgence consistent with the safety of the ship. They had each two glasses of brandy, and sometimes three, per day; but some nations would not taste it, while others would drink as much as we would have given them. Those who did not take their allowance would keep it in their bekka, (cocoa-nut shell;) and when any of the crew did them any little service, they would wait an opportunity, and beckon as slyly as possible, and give it to them. It was really beautiful to witness their kindness to each other of the same nation. If any of us gave one



of them a piece of salt beef—of which they were very fond, but of which they were allowed none, for fear of creating thirst—he that got it, though it were no larger than my finger, would pull it, fibre by fibre, and divide it equally, making, with scrupulous accuracy, his own proportion no larger than any of the others ; while the man that gave it would get the grateful negro's day's allowance of liquor for it, when we went below to secure them for the night. Before they were turned below, they were carefully searched, lest they had concealed a nail, or any bit of iron, in their bekka, or little bag, by which they might have been enabled to undo their chains ; and in the mornings, their irons and berths were as carefully examined. But what availed our care and attention, where sickness and death reigned triumphant ? Never a day passed but one or two were thrown overboard, some days three ; and, during our run to St. Vincent, of six weeks, we lost, out of a cargo of four hundred, one hundred and twenty. Two of the crew also died, and I myself was given up for death by the captain ; but, contrary to his and my own expectation, I recovered rapidly. After I began to get convalescent, I had picked up a few of the poor creatures' words, and did my best, weak as I was, to relieve their wants, which were very urgent. The captain, from the very first, when he observed my dislike to the service I had engaged in, and the pity expressed in my looks, told me to take it easy, for that I would soon get accustomed to it. But I never could. Their complaints and piteous moans ceased not, night nor day. Although they were, in the night, confined below, and the crew had slung their hammocks on deck, under a spare sail, or anywhere they thought they would be most out of the sounds, still their moanings disturbed our sleep. Vain was the threat, 'Nappy becca—paum paum,' (Be quiet—I will beat you,) and the cat shaken over them. 'Eerie eerie cucoo' (I am sick plenty) was the reply.



‘Biea de biea’ (I want the doctor) sounded from every part; but ‘Biea menie’ (I want water) was the constant cry at all times—yet we were liberal in our allowance, and constantly supplying them with it.

“We gave them hot tea, when sick, made of pepper and boiled water, which they relished very much, crying often—‘Biea de biea ocko menie—eerie eerie cucoo.’ (I want the doctor and hot water—I am very sick.) This would often be repeated from twenty voices at once, in their soft, plaintive manner of speaking, as they gathered confidence from the time they had been on board. As long as they were able to move, we forced them to the deck; but we in general found them dead in the morning, when we went below to send them up. Often did the companion of the dead man’s chain feign death, to be thrown overboard with him; but the cat was always applied to test him, and he was kept alive against his will. All this happened oftenest within the first fortnight or three weeks; for, by the fourth week, we had gained their confidence in a great measure, and their fears had worn off. The captain’s custom was, when we found any one of them cheerful, and apparently easy in mind, to take off their chains, clothe them in a pair of trowsers and frock, and give them a charge over their fellows. Then they became proud, and stalked over the deck like admirals—and none more ready with the cat than they. Thus we gained upon them fast—the others envying those whom they saw dressed and trusted; so that, before we reach the end of the voyage, they were all, except some indomitable spirits, clothed, and walking the deck. Though still strictly watched, we allowed some of them to go aloft; and they soon became useful, more especially the boys, who before they left the vessel, were, some of them, no despicable seamen. When freed of their irons, and dressed, if they got the loan of a razor, or even a piece of broken bottle, they



would shave, and cut their hair in their own fashion, and become, if possible, more vain and proud of their appearance. In the middle of this heart-rending misery, at least to me, there was one ray of light that enlivened the gloom.

“We had on board of us a son of Bonnyface, the prime minister or chief favourite of King Peppel. He had been intrusted to Captain Waugh, as a great favour, to take him to England for his education, and we were to take him out again next voyage. Billy Bonnyface acted on board like a ministering angel. He was a sweet boy, and of great service to the captain, in soothing and giving confidence to the slaves, and attending the sick. He felt most acutely for their distress, and was constantly pleading with the captain for some little comfort or other for them—the tears streaming down his ebony face, in which the unsophisticated workings of his young mind were more moving than his words. All looked upon him as a friend, while by those whose language he spoke he was almost adored. All the crew, too, loved him; for to every one of them he had rendered some little service, by interceding for them with the captain, over whom his influence was great. A smarter or more active boy I never saw; he spoke English, for a negro, very well, and took great delight in teaching the black boy-slaves, who learned amazingly fast. I know not how it was, but little Billy loved me more than any other of the crew, and I can safely say there was no love lost. When he had a moment at leisure he was ever with me. You can judge by my looks if there was anything comely in them; yet the dear boy often hung round my neck and kissed me, while I held him to my bosom, and he called me Dad Robion.”

Here the worthy captain paused, as if from extreme emotion. I felt as if I could have wept myself. He hastily resumed—



"I am an old fool. I shall go on, if I don't sicken you with my gossip."

"Proceed," I said—"in charity, proceed."

"I thank you," he replied. "Till now I had almost persuaded myself that no one cared for what I said, but Billy." And here he rung the bell, and the negro entered. "Billy," said he, "it wears late; bring an extra glass, and take your wonted seat."

"Tank you, massa," said the negro; "rather sit wit Mary. Picaninny no sleep yet."

"Well, Billy, as you please," he said, and resumed

"On proceeding to the southward, we got becalmed eleven days in 2° east longitude. After a few days lying logging and motionless upon the water, despondency began to take possession of our minds; our water and provisions were wearing fast away, and the slaves dying fast, three and four being often thrown overboard at once. The most gloomy and fearful ideas began to occupy our minds—death stared us in the face, and we were utterly powerless. On the tenth day, the men began to gather together in parties, and whisper what they feared to speak aloud. They looked with an evil eye upon our chief mate, who was both feared and hated; to the crew he was tyrannical, but to the slaves he was cruel in the extreme; and little Billy avoided him as if he had been a fiend. He was, indeed, a hardened slaver of many years' standing; but the circumstance that would have sealed his doom was, that, on his last voyage to the coast, the ship he was in had been becalmed in the same latitude for twenty weeks; the captain, doctor, and all on board perished, except himself, two boys, and two of the slaves, out of forty-six Europeans and four hundred slaves, which they left the coast with. This was a subject he never wished to hear mentioned, and did all in his power to avoid being spoken to about; but he and I being on the



best of terms, in consequence of my having laid him under deep obligation to me at Bonny, he yielded to my request, and gave me the following details :—

“ ‘ We left the coast of Africa all well,’ he said; ‘ in better health than common, and in high spirits. Nothing particular happened until we were about the place where we now are, when we had, first, variable winds for some days ; then all at once it fell a dead calm, and our sails hung loose upon our masts. We felt no uneasiness at first, as such things are usual in these latitudes ; and we only regretted the loss we were sustaining in our cargo, who had become very sickly, and were dying fast. Thus three weeks passed on, and despair began to steal upon us—our provisions and water began to threaten a shortcoming, and it was now agreed to shorten our allowance of both, until a breeze sprung up. Our crew were listlessly loitering about the deck, and adding to the horrors of our situation by relating dismal stories which they had heard of vessels becalmed in these latitudes ; and their spirits sank still lower and lower. Thus, week followed week, and no relief came—our despondency deepened—more than one-half of our slaves were already dead ; and, by the fourteenth week, our water was almost spent, when it was debated by the crew whether we should not force the remainder of the slaves overboard. We were reduced to perfect skeletons by anxiety and want ; and the slaves were much worse off than even we. When the result of the council was made known to the captain and mate, they gave a decided refusal, and armed themselves, threatening to shoot the first man who would again propose it ; and it was again agreed to shorten yet further our scanty allowance of water. On the sixteenth week, the Europeans began to die as fast as the slaves, who were now reduced to one hundred and four, the crew to thirty-six. Our sufferings were terrible. Our thirst parched and shrivelled



up our throats. So listless were we, that the slaves were now allowed to be at large, and many of them leaped overboard, yelling fearfully as they splashed in the water, we not caring to prevent them, but rather wishing that they might all immolate themselves in the same way. We scarcely every slept when we lay down ; our torments were so great that we would start up in a state of stupefaction, and wander over the deck like ghosts, until we sank down again, exhausted. The eyes of all were dim, some glaring bloodshot, red as raw beef. Several of the crew leaped overboard in a state of wild derangement ; others would be walking or conversing in their usual way, and suddenly drop down dead, expiring without a groan. Thus did we linger out eighteen weeks, when the captain took to his cabin, and died through the night. Death's progress was fearful until the end of the nineteenth week, when all that remained alive out of such a number, were, of the Europeans, only myself and two boys, who kept up better than the men, and two young slaves. But by this time, there was no distinction between black and white : we lay, side by side, looking over the bulwarks of the vessel upon the glassy expanse of water ; then to our sails that hung upon our masts like sere-cloths ; then at each other—and our hearts felt as if they had ceased to beat. The heat was intolerable. We had only half a barrel of water on board, and such water as none ashore would have allowed to remain in their house ; it was putrid, yet we were grieved at the smallness of the quantity ; for in our present condition it was more precious than gold or diamonds, and was to us most sweet. There was still as little appearance of a wind springing up as on the first day of the calm. I was thus in possession of the vessel, without the means of working her, should a breeze spring up. The fear of this made me enlarge the allowance of water to the two slaves and boys, as on their lives my only chance of escape depended ; for,



were they to die, I must, like all my fellows, also die in the calm, or become the sport of the winds and waves, when this appalling stillness in nature should cease to chain me to this fatal spot. How could I express what we felt when we first beheld the ripple upon the distant waters, as the long-looked for wind came gently along ! We stretched out our arms, we wept like children, and the burning drops smarted upon our chopped and blistered faces—the breeze reached our decks, we felt as if our thirst had fled and we were bathed in pure water so balmy did it feel. The sails that had hung loose upon the yards for twenty weeks began to fill. The vessel moved through the water ; I stood at the helm ; and we soon left this fatal latitude far behind. I never left the deck until we arrived at Barbadoes. When overcome by sleep, one of the boys steered by the directions I gave, until I awoke again, and took the helm ; and when the pilot came on board, as we neared the island, we had not one gill of water in the ship.’

“My heart sank within me,” continued the Captain, “at this recital. We were in the same place, and had every prospect of sharing a similar fate. We were on short allowance of water ; and it is the remembrance of these few fearful days that, as I walk alone, will at times even yet come over my mind, and, while their horror is upon me, vivid as it was at the time, if I see water recklessly wasted, I feel angry, until the illusion has fled, and then I bless God that I am in the middle of green fields, and not that watery waste that glowed like a furnace from the intense rays of the sun, and where nothing met the anxious gaze of the sufferer but an expanse of water and sky, both equally bright and unvaried, without cloud in the one or swell in the other, all still as death, save any noise in the vessel, which, if ever so small, was, at this time, fearfully acute to our ears. On the afternoon of the eleventh day, fortunately for the mate, and equally so for us all, a breeze



came rustling along the waters, our sails filled, and we glided along with joyful hearts. Great was the deliverance to us all, but greatest to that threatened victim ; for, had we continued many days in the same situation, the ship's crew would have made a Jonah of him and thrown him overboard, as the man himself did not hesitate to say our bad fortune was solely on his account.

“ On our arrival at St. Vincent, the slaves became very dull and low-spirited, especially when they saw from our decks the gangs of negroes at work in the fields, as we passed up along the shores of the islands. We were now all busy preparing them for the market,—that is, giving them frocks and trowsers, and making them clean ; while the captain sent on shore for the black decoys, to raise their spirits and give them confidence. These decoys are black women, who are some of them free, and others slaves. They make a trade of it, and are well paid ; the money, if they are free, being their own—if slaves, their masters receive it. They come on board gaily dressed, covered with tinsel and loaded with baubles, of which they have a great many to give away to the slaves. As soon as they come on board, under pretence of looking for relations or former friends, (the decoys are of all of the different nations that come from the coast,) they address each in their own tongue ; tell them a number of cock-and-bull stories ; point to themselves ; profess all manner of joy to see them in this land of wealth and happiness, where they will soon be as gay and happy as they are ; and, to show their riches and friendship for them, distribute the baubles among them before they leave the vessel. This has all the desired effect. The poor creatures immediately become full of spirits, and anxious to get on shore. The business of the voyage was now accomplished ; for they were all sold by the agents on shore, and we knew no more of them. As soon as the ship was cleared of the slaves, the carpenters com-



menced to take down the barricades, and we to prepare for returning home, taking in water for ballast. I had no wish to return to Britain at this time, as berths were so difficult to be had when I left home, and I told Captain Waugh so ; but he refused to let me leave the vessel, for he had not many good seamen in his crew ; and I having signed the articles for the whole voyage, did not choose to forfeit my wages thus dearly won—so I at once made up my mind to return, and thought no more of it. We remained here for seven weeks before the captain got all his business settled, during which time I would have wearied very much, had it not been for little Billy, who was seldom from my side. As I went very little ashore, he preferred staying with me to going even with the captain, who was as well pleased at the choice, as his sole object was to be well spoken of by the boy to his father when they returned to the coast, that he might have the favour of old Bonnyface, who was King Peppel's chief minister, and had greater influence with him than any of his other favourites.

“Billy himself was one of the sweetest tempered and smartest boys of his age I ever saw, yet irascible to madness at the least affront from any one ; for his nature had never been subject to the least training, and his passions were under no control. His countenance was the true index of his heart ; and if any of the men intentionally gave him offence, his large black eyes would flash in an instant, he would spring at them like a tiger, to tear them with his teeth, and it would be some time before we could get him appeased ; but, when the rage died away, he would think no more of it, nor would he complain to the captain, as he knew that the man would have been punished. However, it was only when some of the crew returned on board the worse of liquor, that they ever meddled with him ; for otherwise there was not a man in the ship but would have as soon thought of leaping overboard, as giving him the slightest offence.



“Billy began to weary to get under way as much as myself; and when I asked him why he was so anxious to get to Britain, he replied, simply—

“‘I much want to make book speak! You make book speak! Dad Robion, and all white man make book speak! Dat gives much power, dat make big man—so me wish to make book speak.’

“‘I am happy,’ I said, ‘to hear you say so. Will you learn if I teach you, Billy, while we lie here? It will be so far good for you that you will not have to begin when we reach Bristol.’

“‘You make my heart glad,’ he replied. ‘You teach me—me all heart, me all attention, me never tink but what you say.’ And he threw his arms round my neck.

“I was much affected, and seriously thought about what I had undertaken; for there were many difficulties to surmount—the greatest of which was the want of a proper book to begin with. There was not such a thing on board; so I got from the carpenter a smooth board, and formed the letters, telling him their names, and giving them to him to form after me. This he took the utmost delight in, and learned amazingly fast, for he was ever at his board; and, before we left the island, he knew words of one and two syllables in my book of navigation, the only one I had, save my pocket Bible, which he took great delight to hear me read—putting occasionally such puzzling questions to me as made me blush. When I told him it was the book of the white man’s religion, he used to shake his head, and say—

“‘Me no tink dat; for white man swear, white man steal, he drink over too much, he do what book say no; how dat?’

“I felt it quite impossible, from what he saw in our own crew, and what he had seen of the other white men at Bonny, to make him believe that white men had any rule



of conduct but their own inclinations and avarice. I sighed, and gave up the task ; for what is instruction or precept to an ingenuous mind, without example ; and our profession is belied by too many around, who acknowledge and claim the faith as theirs by word, and yet give it the lie by their actions.—At length we sailed, and reached King's Road on the 1st of January, 1789.

“I was so fortunate as get a berth, as mate, on board a West Indiaman, which was taking her cargo on board. Billy was, meanwhile, put to school, and I saw him every evening, at his request, and by Captain Waugh's leave. When he heard I was going to leave Bristol, and not to go back to the coast in the *Queen Charlotte* again, he wept, and importuned me, in the most moving terms, to go to Bonny with him, where he would cause his father to give me as many slaves as I pleased, and he would send his own people to get them for me. I was vexed to part with him, and did what I could to soothe him before my departure ; but still I left him disconsolate. I once more left Bristol in the beginning of February, and had a fine run to Jamaica, where I left the vessel, with the consent of my captain, having made an exchange with a lad belonging to Bristol, who was mate in an American trader, and wished to get home, as he did not keep his health well in these climates ; and, as he was an acquaintance of the captain's, all parties were agreeable. I now continued for several years in the carrying trade between the different islands and the continent of America, saved money very fast, purchased a share of a large brig, and sailed her successfully as captain. The war was now raging between Britain and the French Republic ; but it did not affect my prosperity, for, being now a naturalized American, my ship and papers were a passport to me, and I sailed unmolested by the fleets and privateers of both nations. But my heart was British, and rejoiced in the superiority she held at sea, as if I had



been in the British service, and fighting for my country. For ten years everything had prospered with me. I thought myself rich—for I never was avaricious—and had some thoughts of returning to Edinburgh, when the failure of a mercantile house in Charlestown reduced me once more to a couple of thousand dollars. There was no use of fretting. I had all to do over again, and to it I set. ‘I am yet not an old man, and, if I am spared (a few years are neither here nor there), I will be content with less this bout—so here goes.’ I made over my claim upon the bankrupts to the other creditors for a small sloop that had belonged to them, and began the coasting trade again. I sold my sloop soon after, bought a brig, and took a trip in her to Kingston in Jamaica—when, what was my grief and surprise, to see, in the first lighter that came alongside the vessel, my old friend Billy! I could at first scarcely believe my eyes; I thought I knew the face, but could not call to my recollection where I had seen it, yet I felt I had known it by more than a casual meeting. I was at this time sitting at my cabin window; I saw that the person who had attracted my attention so much was a slave, and allowed the circumstance to pass out of my mind for the time, as I was busy with some papers, and had only been attracted by the sound of the oars as they passed under the stern of the vessel. On the second trip of the lighter I was on deck, and the same individual was there. I caught again his eye; and, as I gazed upon him, he uttered a cry of surprise, stretched forth his arms for a second, then shook his head sorrowfully, and sunk it upon his bosom, as if in despondency. That it was Billy, I had not now the most distant doubt; my heart leaped to embrace him, slave as he was. But how he had come into his present situation I could not conceive. I requested the black who had charge of the *Double Moses* (the name of the craft), to send Billy upon deck; and, as soon as he reached it. I held out my



hand to him. I believe my eyes were not dry; his were pouring a flood of tears upon my hand, which he kissed again and again. The crew and others looked on in amazement. The captain of a brig shaking hands with a black slave! Such an occurrence they had never witnessed; for my crew were native Americans, and looked upon negroes as an inferior race of men. He was now a stout young man, but rather thin and dejected; he was naked, save a pair of old trousers, and his shoulders and back bore the scars of many old and recent stripes. His former vivacity was now nowhere to be traced in his melancholy countenance—the independence of his former manner had all forsaken him—he was, in truth, a broken-in spirit and crushed slave. I resolved at once to purchase his liberty, if within my power, and told him so, when he fell at my feet, wept, and kissed my shoes before I could lift him up. He had not as yet opened his lips—his heart was too full, emotion shook his frame; and, to ease the feeling that seemed like to choke him, I went from the cabin to the state room, leaving him alone, while I sought out a jacket and light vest for him. I staid no longer than was necessary to give him time to recover. It was ever engraven upon my heart, that look of gratitude he gave me. His attempt to speak was still a vain effort. He was another man's slave and liable to punishment. I requested him to go away to his duty, and not tell any one what I meant to do, lest his master should ask an exorbitant sum, if he thought I was resolved to purchase at any price. So he went into the *Moses*, and pulled ashore; but kept his gaze constantly on me.

“As soon as my business would permit, I went on shore before sun-down to make inquiries about his purchase from his present master, and was pleased to find that he was the property of the merchant to whom my cargo was consigned. I told him at once frankly off hand that I wished to pur-



chase a slave of his, to whom I had taken a fancy. He replied, I was welcome to any of them at a fair valuation, and then called his overseer—for he himself cared little about his slaves, hardly knowing them by sight—and inquired if I knew his name. I told him the one I meant was called Billy, and described him. The overseer at once knew whom I meant, and said I would be welcome to him at cost, for he was a stubborn, sulky dog, and gave him much trouble, and, besides, was getting rather sickly ; so that, if I chose, I might have him for two hundred dollars. I at once agreed, and, after supper, went on board, happy that I had succeeded so well ; for Billy was to be handed over to me in the forenoon, as soon as the notary had made out the transfer. At length he came on board, joy beaming in every feature ; but so much had his noble spirit been crushed and broken, that he still felt his inferiority, and stood at an humble distance. He had been taught the severe lesson of what it was to be a slave. When I met him first, all he knew of the white man was the most humble submission to King Peppeland his father's humours. Their word was law to them at Bonny—how great the contrast to him here ! He was insulted, despised, and tortured by the lash, by those very whites he had been taught, when a child, to look upon as scarcely his equals. Had he been even a prince in the interior, his bondage to the whites would not have been half so galling. I beckoned him to follow me to the cabin, where I got from him an account of his adventures since I had left him in Bristol.

“The captain left him at school on his next voyage to the coast, and did not take him out until the second year, when Billy could read English well, and had learned to cipher and write a tolerable hand. On being delivered safe to his father, the prime minister was proud of his accomplishments. Captain Waugh was most liberally re-



warded ; King Peppel was glad to have one about him, who could make 'book speak.' Billy had every appearance of rising into great favour ; but, poor fellow, the accomplishments his father was so proud of, proved the ruin of them both, and of all their family. In King Peppel's court there was as much ambition, intrigue, and rivalry, as in the most civilised in Europe ; nor were the political plotters less scurpulous in the means they used to overturn the influence of a rival. They first began to hint, in an indirect manner, that Bonnyface had sent his son to the white man's land, to learn obi, and write 'feteche' or charms. The King, for some time, only laughed at them ; but their endless inuendoes gradually began to poison his mind ; and, while he became cool and more cool in his manner, the secret enemies had bribed the priests, or 'feteche' men, who also envied Billy his accomplishments, and they openly declared that it was not good to have white man's 'feteches' in the black man's country. Old Bonnyface saw the storm gradually thicken around him, without the means of averting it ; but this torturing state of uncertainty came to a close. The King, who had been ailing for some time, and applying to the surgeons of the slave ships, without much relief, was advised to try the physicians of his own country. These were the priests and feteche men ; and this was the opportunity so long desired by the enemies of Billy's family. It was declared by all that there was a white man's 'feteche' upon him, and they could not remove it ; but gave no opinions as to who it was that had put it on the King. It could be none of the white men in the river, for they all were his friends for trade ; and then they paused, and shook their heads, received their presents, and retired. No one gave the least surmise to the King, who was the charmer ; for this had been done months before. All that had been hinted of Bonnyface and Billy going to Britain rushed upon the



King's mind, aggravated by fear. Next day saw Bonny-face's head struck off, to break the 'feteche;' and the interesting Billy, and all the members of the family, were sold for slaves to the Europeans, their wealth confiscated to the King, and a part of it bestowed upon those who had wrought their ruin. I brought Billy home with me—and here ends my narrative, at least for this evening."

It now being rather late, I bade the Captain good night, and called again in the morning, after breakfast, when I found that the mother and babe were quite restored. Upon inquiry, we learned that the name of her husband was William Robertson. As the day was remarkably fine, I walked with the Captain to the reading-room, and found that the *Czar* had arrived at Leith the day before. We took the stage, and rode down, and soon had the pleasure to see the husband of the Captain's guest. When they met, the Captain seemed much affected at sight of him, and, in an agitated manner, inquired of what part of Scotland he was a native. He said he was born in the Grass-market of Edinburgh; and, upon further inquiry, we found that he was the Captain's cousin, the son of his uncle, who had married after his bankruptcy, and died, leaving his son destitute, who, from necessity, had gone to sea. To conclude, William Robertson came home to Morning-side with us, a happy man. His wife and child resided with the Captain until his death, and that of Billy, who did not survive him many months. The cousin sailed his own vessel out of Greenock, and that was the last account I had from him.



## THE KATHERAN.

Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,  
Sae dauntingly gaed he—  
He played a spring and danced it roun  
Beneath the gallows tree.

IN the latter end of the summer of the year 1700, as a party, consisting of two ladies and two gentlemen, were returning to Banff, the place of their residence, from a distant excursion into the Highlands, they were overtaken by the dusk of evening in the Pass of Benmore, one of the wildest and most desolate spots in the north of Scotland. The ladies of this party were both young, and one of them, in particular, surpassingly beautiful. This lady's name was Ellen Martin, the daughter of a gentleman of great wealth, residing in the neighbourhood of the town above named. At the period we introduce her to the reader, Ellen had just completed her nineteenth year. She was rather under than above the average stature of her sex; but her fragile form was exquisitely moulded, and perfect in all its proportions. Her countenance was oval, glowing with health, and strikingly expressive of a disposition at once confiding, open, and affectionate. In truth, it was impossible to look on the youthful form of Ellen Martin, without feeling that you saw before you the very perfection of female loveliness. But, if there was any particular time or occasion when that beauty was seen to greater advantage than another, it might have been when, shaking aside with a gentle motion of her head the profusion of fair glossy ringlets with which it was adorned, she looked up with her large intelligent, but soft blue eye, and her small rosy lips apart, to catch more distinctly what conversation might be passing around



her. At such a moment, and in such an attitude as this, she seemed, indeed, more like one of those aerial beings that fancy delights to create, than a creature of mortal mould.

The female companion of Ellen Martin, on the occasion of which we have spoken and are about more fully to speak, was an intimate friend. One of the gentlemen was a near relation of Ellen's, the other the brother of her friend. The party, all of whom were mounted on little Highland ponies, having been overtaken by the dusk, began to feel rather uneasy at their situation, as they had yet fully fifteen miles of wild and hilly road to travel before they could reach any place of shelter. They had been perfectly aware, when they set out in the morning, of the distance they had to accomplish, and knew, also, that considerable expedition was required to enable them to complete with daylight the necessary journey ; but, full of health and spirits, and possessed of tastes capable of enabling them to enjoy the splendid scenery which had met them at every turn in their mountain path, they had loitered on the way till they found that they had expended all their time, and had yet accomplished little more than half their journey. In this dilemma, there was nothing for it but to push on—a simple enough corrective of their error, apparently, but one by no means to them of very easy adoption ; for they did not well know in what direction to proceed. Under these circumstances, one of the gentlemen called a halt of the party, to consider of what was best to be done, and to see if their united intelligence could make out where they were precisely, and help to the selection of the best route by which to prosecute their journey. To add to the unpleasantness of their situation, it began to rain heavily, and occasional peals of distant thunder growled amidst the hills.

The party were at this instant crowded together beneath



the shelter of a projecting rock, whither they had retired, to avoid the beating rain, and to hold the consultation to which we have above alluded. Unpleasant, however, as their situation was, they felt no great alarm. The ladies, indeed, expressed some uneasiness occasionally; but it was quickly banished by the rattling glee of their male companions, who, elated with experiencing something like an adventure, were in high spirits, and endeavoured to communicate the same feeling to their fair friends. Ellen, who with all her gentleness of nature and delicacy of form, was of a highly romantic and enthusiastic disposition, was gazing pensively on the mighty masses of hill that rose around her on all sides, and anon down into the deep hollow of the pass, to whose highest point they had nearly attained, when she thought she perceived, through the obscurity of the twilight, a human figure ascending the pass in the direction of the party. She called the attention of her friends to the approaching object, which, in a few minutes was sufficiently near to exhibit the outline of a man of tall stature. He was advancing rapidly, with the light springy step peculiar to the Highlanders, and was traversing with apparent ease, ground, which, from its ruggedness and steepness, would have rendered the progress of one accustomed to such travelling, slow, laborious, and painful. The person now approaching seemed not to feel any such difficulties. He bounded lightly and rapidly over the ground, and in a few minutes was within a few yards of where they stood. On observing the party, he made towards them, and, doffing his bonnet with great politeness, and with the air of a prince, inquired, after apologising for his intrusion, whether they stood in need of any such assistance as one who knew the country well could afford them, and was ready to give.

The person who now stood before the party, and who made this friendly inquiry, was a young gentleman—at



least one whose appearance and manner bespoke him to be such. He was dressed in the full Highland costume of a person of consideration of the period to which our tale refers ; but was fully more amply and carefully armed than was even then usual amongst his countrymen. In his belt he wore, besides the dirk, the common appendage, a couple of pistols, and, by his side, a broadsword of the most formidable dimensions. The figure of this person, who appeared to be about five-and-twenty years of age, was singularly handsome ; his countenance mild and pleasing in its expression, yet strongly indicative of a bold and determined spirit—advantages which were finely set off by the picturesque dress in which he was arrayed, and which he wore with much dignity and grace, and by his erect and martial bearing. His whole figure, in short, was remarkably striking and prepossessing.

“ I fear,” said the stranger, addressing the party, and smiling as he spoke, “ that you have miscalculated the height of our hills and the breadth of our muirs, that you are so late abroad.”

“ It is even so, sir,” said one of the gentlemen ; “ we have been idling our time, and are now reaping the fruits of our thoughtlessness. We neither know well where we are, nor which way we ought to go. I suppose we must just make the most of the situation we are in for the night, although these rocks are but very indifferent covering.”

“ Why, I must say I would not feel much for your case, gentlemen,” said the stranger, “ though you had to sleep on the heather for a night—I have done it a thousand times ; but such quarters would ill suit these fair ladies, I fear.”

“ Yet they must be content to put up with it for this night at any rate,” said one of the gentlemen ; “ for we can make no better of it.”

“ Perhaps *we* may make better of it,” said the stranger.



“Something must be done to get these ladies under shelter. Let me see.” And he mused for a moment, then added—  
“If I thought you would not be overly nice as to the elegance of your quarters, and if you would accompany me for a distance of a couple of miles or so, I think I could promise you, at least, the shelter of a roof, and such entertainment as our Highland huts afford.”

The friendly offer of the stranger being gladly accepted by the party, who, one and all, declared they would be exceedingly thankful for any sort of quarters, the whole set forward under the conduct of their guide. Whether directed by choice or by chance, the latter, at starting, took Ellen’s pony by the bridle, and was subsequently most assiduous in guiding the animal by the easiest and safest tracks. Nor did he once quit his hold for a moment during the whole of their march. This circumstance naturally placed Ellen and the stranger frequently by themselves ; since, as leaders, they generally kept several yards in advance of their party—a circumstance which was not lost on the latter, who aimed at, and succeeded in making, perhaps a somewhat more than favourable impression on his fair companion, by his polished manners and lively and intelligent conversation.

We will not say that the effect of these qualifications was not heightened by the personal elegance and manly beauty of their possessor ; neither will we say that the romantic and susceptible girl was not predisposed, by the same cause, to discover, in all he said, fully more, perhaps, than would have been apparent to a more indifferent listener. Be this as it may, it is certain that on this night, and on this particular occasion, Ellen Martin felt, and felt for the first time, the, to her new, strange, and delightful emotions of incipient love. What avails it to say that prudence should have forbidden this ? The object of Ellen’s sudden regard was a stranger, a total stranger. His name



even was not known, nor his rank in society otherwise than by conjecture; which, though favourable, was, of course, vague and uncertain. The circumstances, too, in which he had been met with, were such as to preclude all possibility of connecting any one single elucidatory fact with his history. But when, in a young and inexperienced mind, did love submit to be controlled by reason? and when did the young heart exhibit the faculty of resisting impressions at will? Certainly not in the case of Ellen Martin, who was, at this moment, placed precisely in those circumstances most eminently calculated for exciting, in susceptible bosoms, the one great and engrossing passion of the female heart.

After about an hour's travelling, the party, with their guide, arrived at a solitary house situated in a little glen or strath overhung with precipitous rocks, and through which wound a narrow and irregular road, that led in one direction over the hills that stretched far to the west, and in the other to the lower grounds, from which the neighbouring mountains rose. The house itself, although apparently a very old one, was of the better order of houses in the Highlands at that period. It was two stories in height, roofed with grey slate, and exhibited at wide intervals small dingy windows filled with the thick, wavy, and obscure glass of the time. Altogether it had the appearance of being the residence of a person of the rank of a small proprietor or tacksman. As the party approached the house, all was quiet within and around it. Not a light was seen, or movement heard. The hour was late, and the inmates had been long to rest. When within a short distance of the house, the conductor of the party, addressing the latter, said :—

“ You will be so good as wait here, my friends, for a few minutes, until I prepare Mr. Chisholm for your reception. He is an old and intimate friend of mine, and will be glad, on my account, to show you every kindness in his power.”



Having thus expressed himself, he left them, and, in a few moments after, returned to conduct them to the house, where they were received with great kindness by the landlord, a middle-aged man, of respectable appearance and mild manners. On entering, the party were ushered into a large room, where a servant girl was busily employed in kindling a fire of peats. These quickly bursting into flame, the travellers, in a very few minutes, found themselves enjoying the agreeable warmth of a blazing fire. But the kindness of their host was not limited to external comforts. With true Highland hospitality, the board was loaded with refreshments of various kinds ; huge piles of oaten cake, with proportionable quantities of eggs, cheese, butter, cold salmon, and mutton ham ; and, though last, not least, a little round, black, dumpy bottle of genuine mountain dew.

Delighted with their reception, pleased with each other, and urged into that exuberance of spirits which good cheer and comfortable quarters are so well qualified to inspire, especially when they present themselves so unexpectedly and opportunely as in the case of which we are speaking—the party soon began to get exceedingly merry ; so much so, that they finally determined, as morning was now fast approaching, not to retire to bed at all, but to spend the few hours they intended remaining where they were. In this resolution they were the more readily confirmed by a certain proceeding of their late guide, in happy accordance with the mirthful feelings of the moment. This was his taking down from the wall a fiddle, which hung invitingly over the fire-place, and striking up some of the liveliest airs of his native land. The effect was irresistible ; for he played with singular grace and skill, striking out the notes with a distinctness, precision, and rapidity, that gave the fullest effect possible to the merry strains which he poured on the ears of the captivated listeners. The party



were electrified. The gentlemen leapt to their feet, the table was removed bodily, with all its furniture, to one side of the apartment, and, in an instant after, the ladies also were on the floor. In another, the whole were wheeling through the mazes of a Highland reel. Nor did the merriment cease till the rising sun alarmed the revellers, by suddenly pouring his effulgence into the apartment. On this hint, the music and mirth both were instantly hushed; and the party, throwing aside the levity of manner of the preceding hours, began, with business looks, to prepare for their departure. Their host pressed them to stay breakfast; but, being anxious at once to get forward and to enjoy the morning ride, this invitation they declined. Their ponies, which had been in the meantime carefully attended to by their hospitable landlord, were brought to the door, and in a few minutes the whole party were mounted, and were about to start, when the circumstance of their late guide's again taking the reins of Ellen's pony in his hand, and apparently preparing to repeat the service of the previous night, for a moment arrested their march; all protesting that they would on no account permit him to put himself, by accompanying them, to the slightest further inconvenience on their account. With what sincerity Ellen joined in this protest—for she did join in it—we do not know; but it is certain that her opposition to his accompanying them did not appear at all so cordial as that of her companions.

The objections of the party, however, were politely, but peremptorily overruled by their guide, who reconciled them to his determination of escorting them, by remarking that, without his assistance, they would never find their way amongst the hills, and that, moreover, he was going at any rate several miles in the very direction in which their route lay. These assurances, particularly the latter, left no room for farther debate, and the party proceeded on their way; the guide and Ellen, as before, leading the march. But,



as it was now daylight when any little chance distance that might occur between the parties was of less consequence and less attended to, they were always much farther in advance than on the preceding night; indeed, frequently so far as to be for a considerable time out of sight of their companions. In this proceeding, Ellen had, of course, no share whatever. It was solely the result of a certain little course of management on the part of her escort, who availed himself of every opportunity of widening the distance between his fair companion and the other members of the party. It was on one of these occasions, when the lovers—for we may now without hesitation call them such—had turned the shoulder of a hill which Ellen's guide knew, calculating from the distance which the party were behind, would conceal them from the view of the latter for a considerable time—it was on this occasion, we say, that he suddenly seized Ellen by the hand, and, ere she was aware, hurried it to his lips; but, as quickly resigning it—

“Ellen,” he said, looking up to her with an expression of tenderness and contrition that instantly disarmed the gentle girl of the resentment into which the freedom he had just taken had for an instant betrayed her—“forgive me—will you forgive me? That cursed impetuosity of temper—the failing of my race, Ellen—has hurried me into an impropriety. I have offended you. I see it—but do forgive me.”

“On condition that you do not attempt to repeat it,” said Ellen, smiling, though there was evidently much agitation in her manner.

“I promise,” replied the offender. A pause ensued, during which neither spoke. At length, Ellen's guide, who seemed to have been struggling with some powerful and oppressive motion, suddenly, but gently arrested the progress of the pony on which she rode, and said, in a voice altered in tone by intensity of feeling—



"Ellen, I wish to God we had never met!"

"Why should you entertain such a wish?" inquired Ellen, timidly, and blushing as she spoke.

"Because then I had not been broken-hearted," said her companion, with a sigh. "I had still retained my peace of mind—my step should still have been light on the heather, and my thoughts free and careless as the wind upon the mountains."

"You speak in enigmas," replied Ellen, blushing deeper than before. "I do not understand you," she added, but with a manner that contradicted the assertion.

"Then I will be more plain with you, Ellen," replied her companion:—"I love you, I love you, fair girl, to distraction."

This declaration was too unequivocal to be evaded; yet poor Ellen, though her heart responded to the sentiment, knew not what reply to make in words. Her agitation was extreme—so great as almost to impede her respiration.

"We are strangers, sir," she at length said—"total strangers; and such language as this should, if spoken at all, be spoken only when it is warranted by a longer and more intimate acquaintance. Ours is literally but of yesterday, although you have certainly crowded into that short space as much kindness as it would possibly admit of; and I and my friends are grateful for it—sincerely grateful. Still we are but strangers."

"Strangers, Ellen!" replied her lover, getting more and more energetic and impassioned as he spoke—"no, we are not strangers—at least you are none to me. From the first instant I saw you, you were no longer a stranger. From that instant, you had a home in this heart, and on that instant you stood before me confessed one of the loveliest and gentlest of your sex. What more would an age of acquaintance have discovered? What more is there need to learn."



At this instant, a shout from one of the gentlemen of the party interrupted the enthusiastic speaker, and put an end, for the time, to the conversation of the lovers. The call, however, that had been made on their attention by their friend, being merely intended to intimate that they had them in view, Ellen's guide soon found another opportunity of renewing his suit. We do not, however, think it necessary that we should renew a description of it—tedious as the conversation of all lovers is to third parties. We shall only say, then, that, long ere Ellen and her handsome and accomplished guide parted, the affections of the simple, confiding girl were unalterably fixed. Whether they were happily disposed of, the sequel will show.

After having crossed “muirs and mountains mony o’,” Ellen and her lover arrived on the ridge of a hill, which commanded a distinct, though distant view of the town of Banff, when the latter suddenly stopped, and—“Ellen,” he said, “here we must part. I can proceed no farther with you; but it will go hard with me if I do not see you very soon again.”

“Nay,” said Ellen, “since you have come so far with us, you must go yet a little farther. You must go on to the town, and afford us an opportunity of acknowledging the obligations under which we lie to you. My father will be most happy to see you.”

The expression of a sudden pang crossed the fine countenance of the stranger. His lip quivered, and his brow contracted into momentary gloom; but, with what was apparently a strong effort, he subdued the feeling, whatever it was, which had caused this indication of mental pain, and replied, after a brief pause—

“No, Ellen, it cannot be. I must not—I—I dare not enter Banff with the light of day.”

“Dare not!” said Ellen, in surprise. “Why dare you not? What or whom have you to fear?”



“Fear?” replied her companion, somewhat distractedly —“I fear the face of no single man, weapon to weapon; but, were I to enter Banff, I might not have such fair play. There are some persons there with whom I am at feud; and my life would be in danger from them. This was what I meant, when I said that I dared not enter Banff. Yet it is not that I would not *dare* either,” he added, raising himself proudly to his full height, and laying an emphasis expressive of defiance on the word; “but it would be foolhardy—absurdly imprudent. I cannot—I may not go further with you, Ellen.”

Here the conversation was interrupted by the approach of the rest of the party, who at this moment rode up to Ellen and her companion. These, on being told that the latter was now about to leave them, repeated, and in nearly similar words, the invitation which Ellen had already given him; but it was not in similar words to those he had used on that occasion, he answered them. To them he merely said that pressing business called him in another direction, and repeated that, where they now were, they must part. He however, promised, though with the manner of one who has no fixed intention of fulfilling that promise, that the first time he went to Banff, if circumstances would permit, he would certainly pay them a visit.

“Since you will not go with us, then,” said one of the gentlemen, “at least inform us to whom we are indebted for the extraordinary kindness which you have shewn us. Favour us with your name if you please.”

“My name, sir!” said the late guide, smiling. “Why, that is a matter of no consequence. You will know me when and wherever you may see me again, I dare say, and that is enough.” Saying this, he shook hands with each of the party—with Ellen this ceremony was accompanied by a look and pressure of peculiar intelligence—and bounded away with the same light and elastic step with which he



had approached them on the preceding night, and was soon lost to view.

It would not be easy for us to say precisely what were the opinions entertained by Ellen's party, of the warm-hearted but mysterious person who had just left them. These were various, vague, and indefinite. That he was a person far above the ordinary classes of the country, was evident from his dress, his manner, and his accomplishments. The first was that of a gentleman, the latter were those of a man of education and talent. These obvious proofs of his rank there was no gainsaying; nor would they admit of any difference of opinion. But it had not escaped those who were now engaged in discussing the subject of the stranger's probable history, that, during the whole time they had been together, neither his name, profession, nor place of residence, had ever transpired. They had not been at any time alluded to, even in the slightest or most distant manner. It was only now, however, that the oddness of this circumstance seemed to strike the members of the party with the full force of its peculiar character. Each now asked the other in surprise, if they had not ascertained any of the particulars just mentioned from the stranger; and all declared that they had not. More extraordinary still, as it now appeared on reflection, his name had never once been mentioned by the person in whose house they had passed the previous evening. In this investigation, the circumstance of the stranger's having declined to give his name at parting was not of course forgotten. The affair altogether was a singular one—a conclusion at which all arrived; but it was one also, which their discussion could throw no light on; and this being sensibly felt by all, the subject was gradually dropped.

To what extent the doubts and indefinite suspicions with which the mystery associated with their late guide had inspired the various members of the party, were shared by



Ellen, we do not know ; but we suspect that, in her bosom, they were mingled with feelings that had the effect of giving them a totally different character from what they assumed in the minds of her companions. In her case, these doubts or suspicions were wholly unassociated with any idea unfavourable to the character of him whose conduct excited them. She saw, indeed, that there was a degree of concealment on the part of that person ; but she never, for a moment, dreamt that it proceeded from any reasons involving anything disgraceful. In the fondness of her love, she conceived it impossible that a being of so kind and generous a heart, of so prepossessing appearance and manners, and of so noble a form, could ever have been guilty of anything which should subject him to the debasing feelings of either shame or fear. She felt there was mystery, but she was satisfied it was not the mystery of crime ; and, under this conviction, she continued to cherish the love which had thus so suddenly sprung up in her own guiltless and guileless bosom. The party, in the meantime, were rapidly approaching the place of their respective residences, and a very short time after saw that consummation attained.

If we now allow somewhere about the space of a month to elapse, and if we then look, in the dusk of a certain evening, into a certain retired green lane or avenue, at the distance of somewhat less than a quarter of a mile from the residence of Ellen Martin's father, in the vicinity of the town of Banff, and which, being on the property of the latter, was secluded from all intrusion, we shall then and there find two persons walking together, in earnest and secret conversation. If we approach them nearer, we shall discover that they are lovers ; for there is the gentle accent and the endearing concourse of fond hearts. They are Ellen Martin and her mysterious lover ; and this is the fifth or sixth night on which they have so met since



they parted at the time and in the manner before described.

"But why this mystery, James?"—for this much of his name had she obtained—Ellen might have been overheard, by an eavesdropper, saying to her lover on this occasion, as she leant on his arm, and gazed fondly in his face. "Why all this mystery?—why is it that you come and go only under the shade of night?—and why is it that you shun the face of man with such sedulous anxiety?—and why, above all, are you always so carefully armed? Oh, do confide in me, James, and tell me all. Relieve my mind. Tell me the reason of these things. You wrong me by this mystery; for it implies a suspicion of my sincerity—it implies that you think me unworthy of being trusted."

"Doubt your sincerity, Ellen!—think you unworthy of being trusted!" said the person whom she addressed, emphatically but tenderly. "Sooner would I doubt the return of yonder moon—sooner would I doubt that the sea would flow again after it has ebbed—than doubt your sincerity, love; but I cannot, I will not, I dare not give you the information you ask; for, with that information I would loose you for ever; and what, think you, would induce me to inflict such misery as that on myself? Be content, Ellen, in the meantime at least, with an assurance of my love—yes, unworthy as I am," he exclaimed, with increased fervour, "of a love as strong, as sincere, as pure as ever existed in a human bosom."

"I never doubted it, James—I never doubted it," said Ellen, bursting into tears, and leaning her head fondly on the shoulder of her lover; "and I will not press you further for that information which you seem so reluctant to give. I will, in the meantime, as you say, confide in your fidelity, and leave the rest to some future and happier hour."

"Happier hour, Ellen!" said her companion, with a bitter



smile. "Alas? there is no happier hour than this in store for me. But it is happiness enough." And he chanted in a low, but mellifluous voice—

"There's glory for the brave, Ellen,  
And honour for the true;  
There's woman's love for both, Ellen—  
Such love's I find in you.

"There's wealth into the Indies, Ellen,  
There's riches in the sea—  
But I would not give for these, Ellen,  
One little hour with thee."

"A poor bargain, James," said Ellen, smiling and blushing at the same time. "You are a fair poet, but very indifferent chapman, if that be a specimen of your bargain-making."

"It may be so, Ellen," replied her companion, also smiling; "yet I am willing to abide by the terms."

At this instant, a rustling noise was heard amongst the bushes close by where the lovers stood. The mysterious stranger started, hurriedly freed his sword hilt from the folds of his plaids, muttering, as he did so—

"Ha! have they dogged me? They shall rue it. By heaven, they shall rue it!—I shall not be taken cheaply!" And he half unsheathed his weapon, as he stood listening for a repetition of the sounds which had alarmed him; but they were not repeated; and the uneasiness of the lovers gradually subsiding, they resumed their conversation. At the expiry of another "little hour," the lovers parted, and parted to meet no more—a misfortune which they but little anticipated; for a solemn promise was given by both to meet in the same place and at the same hour on that day se'ennight.

As it may lead to the gratification of some curiosity on the part of the reader regarding the mysterious lover of



Ellen Martin, we shall follow his footsteps after leaving her in the manner just described. We may as well, first, however, make the reader aware that these visits of the person alluded to were by no means of very easy accomplishment. They cost him a journey, over mountain and moor, of upwards of a score of miles; but he was light of foot, nimble as one of the deer of his native mountains, and such a feat to him was not one which he deemed much to boast of. If we follow him, then, as proposed, on the night in question, we shall find him performing such a journey as we have alluded to, and finally arriving at a deep but narrow glen, or ravine, far up amongst the hills, and accessible only at one extremity, and even here of such difficult entrance that none but those intimately acquainted with it could effect it. This knowledge, however, the person whom we are now accompanying possessed. He ascended the natural barrier by which the ravine was closed with a sure but rapid step; when, having gained its utmost height, and ere he descended on the opposite side, he extricated a small bone or ivory whistle from the folds of his plaid, and drew from it a short, low, but piercing sound. Had he omitted this precaution, his life would have been the forfeit; for, concealed amongst the copsewood, at a little height inside of the glen, lay a sentinel with loaded rifle, whose duty it was instantly to fire on any one entering without such intimation previously given of his being a friend. Having sounded the whistle, the person of whom we were speaking, without waiting for any response—for none was required—plunged down into the ravine below, bounding from crag to crag like a hunted chamois, and trusting for security on each airy footing to a handful of the lichen which grew from the precipitous wall of rock down which he was descending.

Having gained the bottom of the ravine, he pushed on towards its centre, when he again ascended, and now



made for a clump of copsewood, which grew at a considerable height on the side of the glen. This gained, he dashed the branches aside, and, in the next instant, plunged into a cavern whose dark mouth they concealed. Accompanying him thus far also, we shall find the companion of our travels reaching a large and lofty chamber, in the centre of which burnt a huge fire of peats, built on a circular piece of rude masonry, and around which are seated eight or ten men. Here and there may be seen resting against the walls of the chamber the large steel basket-hilts of broadswords, and, in different corners, accumulations of plaids and bonnets. Another object also will strike us. This is several immense sides of beef, and several carcasses of mutton, hung up in various parts of the cave, all ready for the operations of the cook. Neither the character of the place, nor of those by whom it is occupied, can be mistaken. It is a den of Highland katherans.

The reception by the latter of the person whom we have just intruded upon them, was very markedly cold and distant; and it was rendered more so by the contrast between his manner to them on his entrance, and theirs to him. The former was cheerful and conciliatory, the latter sullen and repulsive.

"The eagle's eyry is not now in the cleft of the rock," said one. "It is in the barn-yard."

"Ay, the deer has left the mountain, and gone to herd with the swine," said another.

"I understand you, friends," replied the intruder. "You do not approve of these wanderings of mine. You think I am taming down into some such animal as a Lowland shopkeeper or Wanshaw weaver—and perhaps it is so, in some measure; but I cannot help it. I acknowledge that the whole energies of my nature—all the feelings of my heart—have undergone a total change, both in character



and direction. I certainly am not the man I was. I feel it, and therefore feel that I am no longer fit to be your leader."

"Macpherson," said one of the men, "you guess part of our feelings towards you just now, but not all. There is in these feelings at least as much of fear for your safety in these excursions of yours, as displeasure with your neglect of us and our common interest. You know that we love you, Macpherson, for yours is the generous and open hand—yours is the hand that was never raised in anger against the unoffending or the helpless, and never closed in hard-heartedness against the needy."

"No, thank God," replied the person thus eulogized—"much evil as I have done, the shedding of blood is no part of it. Personal injury I have never yet done to any man, nor to any man shall I ever do it, unless in self-defence. Neither can the poor ever say they asked from me in vain. But, my friends," went on the speaker, "this is but a melancholy strain. Come, let us have something of a livelier spirit, and let me see if I cannot introduce it." Having said this he went to a corner of the cavern, where lay a large wooden chest. This he opened, and drew out a violin. It was a favourite instrument, and well could the person who now held it, employ it. Seating himself on an elevated bench of stone, which had been erected by the inmates of the cavern against the wall, he commenced playing some cheerful airs, and with such effect that he very soon dissipated the angry feelings of his auditors, and brought expressions of benevolence and good will into these rugged countenances, that had been but a little before lowering with gloom and discontent. The skilful minstrel, perceiving the effect of his music—an effect, indeed, which former experience had taught him to anticipate with perfect certainty—now changed his strain, and launched into a series of the most thrilling and pathetic



airs, all of which he played with exquisite taste and expression.

Had any one at this moment watched the fierce and weather-beaten faces of those who were listening in breathless silence to the delightful tones of his violin, they might have marked in the eye of more than one, an unbidden tear, and on all an expression of deep sympathy with the spirit of the music. At length the musician ceased; but it was some time before the spell which he had thrown over his auditors was broken. For some seconds, there was not a word or a movement amongst them—all continuing to remain in the fixed and pensive attitude in which the melancholy strains had bound them.

Having brought his performances to a close, the musician, half in earnest and half playfully, hugged his violin, as if exulting in its power, to his bosom, embraced it as if it had been a living thing, and hurried with it to the chest from which he had originally taken it, and there again carefully deposited it. His reception on now returning to the party whom he had just been entertaining with his music, was very different from what it had been on his first entrance. Their better and kindlier feelings had been touched by his strains—a sympathetic chord in each bosom had been struck; and the effects were sufficiently visible in the altered manner of those who were thus affected towards him whose skill had produced the change. The transition of the feelings of admiration was natural and easy from the music to the musician; and looks and words of kindness and forgiveness now greeted the mountain Orpheus, who took his place among the rest, to share in some refreshment which had been, in the meantime, in preparation.

Leaving the katherans employed in discussing this repast, which consisted simply of roasted kid, we will proceed to divulge the whole of that secret regarding the chief



personage of our tale, which we have hitherto so carefully kept. This personage, then, was no other than the celebrated freebooter, Macpherson. This man, as is well known, was the illegitimate son of a gentleman of family and property in Inverness-shire, by a woman of the gipsy race. He was brought up at his father's house; but, on the death of the latter, was claimed and carried away by his mother; when, joining the wandering tribe to which she belonged, he acquired their habits, and finally became the character which we have represented him—namely, a leader of a band of katherans. He was a person of singular talents and accomplishments, of uncommonly handsome form and feature, of great strength, yet, though of a lawless profession, of kind and compassionate disposition. Such was the hero of our tale—such the lover of Ellen Martin, although little did that poor girl yet know how unhappily her affections had been placed.

Having nothing whatever to do with the proceedings of Macpherson and his band during the interval between the parting of the former with Ellen and the period of the proposed meeting—these having but little interest in themselves, and being in no way connected with our story—we will at once pass this space of time, and bring up our narrative to the day on which Macpherson was again to set out for the trysting place. His motive and feelings in this matter he confided only to one friend out of all his comrades. This man, whose name was Eneas Chisholm, was the son of the person at whose house the reader will recollect the party, of which Ellen was one, was so hospitably entertained on the night they had lost their way on the mountains. It was he, also, who had eulogized the generosity and clemency of Macpherson, as we a short while since recorded. He was a young man, and, both in manner and disposition, much like Macpherson himself. He possessed all his warmth and sincerity of heart, katheran as



he was; but was greatly his inferior in talents and in personal appearance. Taking an opportunity when none else were near, Macpherson informed this person that he intended on that evening repeating his visit to Banff.

"It is madness, Macpherson," said Eneas—"downright madness. You surely do not calculate on the risk you run, in these desperate adventures of yours, of falling into the hands of the sheriff. You are well known, and it is next to a miracle that you escape."

"No danger, Eneas, none at all man," replied Macpherson, in the confidence of his own prowess, and not a little perhaps, in that of his agility. "I have done more daring things in my day on far less inducement; and," he added, proudly, "give me fair play, Eneas, my sword in my hand, and not any six men in Banff will take James Macpherson alive."

"But they may take him dead, though, Macpherson," said Eneas, "and you can hardly call that escaping, I think."

"Cheer up, cheer up my bonny, bonny May

Oh, why that look of sorrow?

He's wise that enjoys the passing hour—

He's a fool that thinks of the morrow!"

exclaimed Macpherson, slapping his friend jocosely on the shoulder. "Why man, Ellen Martin I must see, and Ellen Martin I will see, let the risk be what it may—ay, although there were a halter dangling on every tree between this and Banff, and every noose were gaping for me."

"Then, at least, allow three or four of us to accompany you, Macpherson, in case of accidents," said Eneas.

"No, no; not one, Eneas," replied Macpherson—"no life shall be perilled in this cause but my own. If I am unfortunate, I shall be so alone. I alone must pay the penalty of my own rashness and imprudence. I would not put a dog's life in jeopardy, let alone yours, in such a mat-



ter as this. But I'll tell you what," he added: "I'll exact a promise from you, Eneas."

"What is that?" said the latter.

"It is," replied Macpherson, "that, if I am taken, and taken alive, you will do what you can to have my violin conveyed to me to whatever place of confinement I may be carried."

"It is an odd fancy," said Chisholm, smiling; "but I promise you it shall be done, since you desire it."

"I do," replied Macpherson. And here the conversation between him and his friend terminated; and, shortly after, the former having carefully armed himself, set out alone on his perilous journey. The sun, when he left the glen, had already sank far down into the west; while his slanting rays were yet beating with full fervour and intensity on those sides of the rocks and hills that looked towards the setting luminary, their opposite fronts were involved in a rapidly deepening shade, and the valleys were beginning to be darkened with a premature twilight. But Macpherson had calculated his time and distance accurately. Three hours of such walking as his would bring him to the goal he aimed at, and then the gloaming would be on the verge of darkness. And it was so, in each and all of these particulars. He arrived at the trysting-place precisely at the time and in the circumstances he desired. On reaching the appointed spot, Ellen was not yet there. Neither did he expect she should; but he felt assured that she would very soon appear. Under this conviction, he seated himself on a small green bank, closely surrounded with thick shrubbery or copsewood, and, thus situated, awaited her arrival.

Leaving Macpherson thus disposed of for a time, we shall advert to a circumstance of which he was but little aware, although it was one which deeply, fatally concerned him. He had been seen and recognised. The per-



sons—for there were two—who made the discovery, dogged the ill-starred freebooter to the place of his appointment with Ellen, where, seeing him stop, one of them hurried away to communicate the important intelligence to the sheriff, while the other remained to keep watch on the motions of the unsuspecting outlaw. On the former's being introduced to the presence of the dreaded officer just named—

“What would you give, Mr. Sheriff,” he said, “to know where Macpherson the freebooter is at this moment?”

“Why, not much, man,” replied the sheriff, “unless he were so situated as to render it probable that I could take him. I have known where he was myself a hundred times, but dared not touch him.”

“But I mean as you say—I mean in a situation where he may be easily taken,” rejoined the man. “I know where he is at this instant, and all alone too—not one with him.”

“You do!” exclaimed the Sheriff, with great animation, for the capture of Macpherson had been long one of the most anxious wishes of his heart. “Where, where is he, man?” he added, impatiently.

“Let me have half-a-dozen well-armed men with me,” replied his informant, “and for fifty merks I will make him your prisoner.”

“Done!” said the Sheriff, exultingly—“fifty merks shall be yours, of well and truly told money, the instant you put Macpherson into my power; and, instead of half-a-dozen men, you shall have a whole dozen, and I myself will accompany you. Is he far distant?”

“Not exceeding a mile.”

“So much the better—so much the better,” said the Sheriff, rubbing his hands with glee. “If we take him, a worthier deed has not been done in Scotland this many



a day. It were worth a thousand merks a-year to the shire of Banff alone."

In less than fifteen minutes after this conversation had passed, a sudden bustle might have been seen about the old town-house of Banff. This was occasioned by a number of men, amongst whom was the sheriff, hurriedly ransacking the town armoury for such warlike weapons as it contained, each choosing and arming himself with the best he could find. This choice, however, was neither very extensive nor varied; the stock, chiefly consisting of some rusty Lochaber axes, and a few equally rusty halberds and broadswords, kept for the array of the civic guard on great occasions—sometimes of love and sometimes of war.

The party having all now armed themselves, were drawn up in front of the town-house, when the sheriff, placing himself at their head, gave the word to march; and the whole moved off under the guidance of the person whose intelligence had been the cause of their turning out. After they had proceeded about a mile, the latter called a halt of the party, and taking the sheriff two or three paces in advance, pointed out to him the spot in which he had left Macpherson, and where, as they were informed by the man who had remained to watch his motions, and who at this moment came up to them, he still was.

A consultation was now held as to the best mode of proceeding to the capture of the dreaded outlaw—a feat by no means considered either a safe or an easy one by those by whom it was now contemplated; for all were aware of his prowess, and of the desperate courage for which he was distinguished.

Macpherson, in the meantime, wholly unconscious of his danger, was still quietly seated on the small green bank where we left him. Ellen had not yet appeared, and he



was listlessly employed in drawing figures on the ground with the point of his scabbard, when he was suddenly startled by a similar noise amongst the bushes with that which had alarmed him on a former occasion. He sprung to his feet, drew a pistol from his belt with his left hand, and his sword from its sheath with his right, and, thus prepared, awaited the result of the motion, which he now saw as well as heard. The rustling increased, the foliage rapidly opened in a line approaching him, and, in an instant afterwards, his friend, Eneas Chisholm, stood before the astonished freebooter.

"Eneas!" he exclaimed, under breath, but in a tone of great surprise.

"Hush, hush!" said Eneas, seizing his friend by the arm—"not a word. In five minutes you will be surrounded. You have been recognised and dogged. There are a dozen of the sheriff's men within five hundred yards of you, planning your capture. Let us be off—off instantly, Macpherson," he continued, urging the latter onwards. "If we can gain the town, we may escape. I know a place of concealment there."

"Nay, but Ellen—Ellen, Eneas!" said Macpherson, hanging backwards, and resisting the efforts of his friend to drag him away.

"Fool, fool, man!" said Eneas, passionately, and still urging him forcibly along. "An instant's delay, and both you and I are in the hands of our deadliest enemies."

"We can fight, Eneas."

"Ten times a fool!" exclaimed the latter, with increasing anger. "Fight a dozen men, all as well armed as ourselves!—and observe, besides," he added, "your obstinacy will sacrifice me as well as yourself."

"Ay, there you have me," replied Macpherson. "That shall not be—God forbid!" And he hurried along with his friend.



At this instant, a shrill whistle was heard from the copsewood.

"They are on us," exclaimed Eneas, as, with one bound, he cleared a five feet wall that intervened between them and the highway that led to the town of Banff.

He was instantly followed by Macpherson, who, having thrown his sword over before him, cleared the impediment with yet greater ease. Having gained the road, the two outlaws hurried towards the town. No pursuer had yet appeared; and it seemed as if they had already effected their escape. In this fancied security, the fugitives slackened their pace, that they might not incur the risk which would attach to a suspicious haste. During all this time, not a word more than we have recorded had passed between them. They had pursued their way in silence, and were thus just entering the town, when Macpherson suddenly felt himself seized by both arms from behind. Their route had been marked, and they were intercepted.

Macpherson, exerting his great personal strength, with one powerful effort freed himself from the grasp of his assailants—for there were two—flinging both, at the same instant, to the ground by a sudden and violent extension of his arms. Having thus set himself at liberty, he hastily drew his sword, and stood upon the defensive. His friend, Eneas, also drew, when they found themselves opposed to at least a dozen—the two who had sprung on Macpherson, being now joined by their comrades. Undaunted by the number of their enemies, and aware of what would be their fate if taken, the intrepid outlaws determined on a desperate resistance. Macpherson, with his other accomplishments, was an admirable swordsman, and he felt that he had not much to fear from the unskilled rabble to whom he was opposed, so long as he could keep them from closing with him—and in this conviction he coolly awaited their onset.



It was some minutes before this took place ; for their opponents, awed by their fierce and determined bearing, hung back. At length, however, they seemed to be gathering courage by degrees, as they came gradually moving on, till they were within two or three paces of Macpherson and his comrade, when two of the boldest of them made a sudden rush on the former, with the view of rendering his weapon useless, by closing on him ; but the attempt was fatal to the assailants. With a fierce shout of defiance and determination, Macpherson struck down the foremost, with a blow that split his head to the chin, while his comrade despatched the other by running him through the body. Both the outlaws, on striking, leapt back a pace or two, so as to maintain the necessary distance between them and their enemies, who were still pressing on. But, panic-stricken by this, the first results of the encounter, they now paused, and entered into a hasty consultation, which ended in the resolution of their attacking simultaneously, and in a body, and thus, by mere force, bearing down their opponents. Acting on this resolution, the whole rushed forward, with loud shouts, when a desperate conflict took place. For a long time, both Macpherson and his friend not only warded off the numerous cuts and thrusts that were made at them, but brought down several of their assailants, one after the other ; and the issue of the contest seemed very doubtful, great as the odds were against them.

In the meantime, however, Macpherson, though fighting desperately, was compelled to yield ground, to avoid being closed upon and surrounded ; for the pressure of the crowd was now greatly increased by an accession of town's people, who, having heard the din of the conflict, hastened to the scene to witness it, and to assist in the capture of the freebooters. Finding himself in danger of being assailed from behind, he rushed to one side of the street, and,



placing his back to the wall of a house, flourished his sword, and defied the whole host of enemies who pressed upon him; and out of that whole host there was not one who would come within reach of the courageous outlaw thus desperately at bay. For fully a quarter of an hour he kept a circle of several yards clear around him, and having in this interval gained breath, it seemed extremely doubtful that he should be captured at all; for it was possible that, by a desperate effort, he might cut his way through his assailants and effect his escape. In truth, seeing the timidity of his enemies from the circumstance of none of them daring to approach him, some such proceeding he now actually contemplated. But a counter measure was at this moment in operation, which prevented its execution, and placed the outlaw in the hands of his enemies.

A person from the crowd entered the house, against the wall of which Macpherson was standing, by a back door, and proceeded to an apartment, one of whose windows was immediately above and within a few feet of him. Opening this window cautiously, this person having previously provided himself with a large heavy Scotch blanket, threw it, as broadly extended as possible, over the outlaw, thus blinding him and disabling him from using his weapon. The crowd beneath—marking the proceeding which Macpherson, from his position, could not—watching the moment when the blanket descended, rushed in upon him, threw him to the ground, disarmed, and secured him; his friend, Eneas, who had been early separated from him in the *melée*, and who had not attracted, during any period of the conflict, so much of the attention of their common enemies, having contrived, previous to this, to effect his escape.

On being captured, he was bound, conveyed to prison, and a strong guard placed over him. On the following day, an elderly woman, dressed in the antique garb of her



country—the Highlands—was seen walking up and down in front of the jail in which Macpherson was confined, and ever and anon casting a look of anxious inquiry towards the building. A nearer view of this person discovered that her eyes were red with weeping; but all her tears had been already shed, and the first excess of grief had passed away; for both her look and manner, though still expressive of deep sorrow, were grave, staid, and composed—nay, even stern. Occasionally, however, she might be seen, as she stood gazing on the prison-house of the unfortunate outlaw, rocking to and fro with that slow and silent motion so expressive of the intensity of mental suffering. Occasionally, too, a low murmuring of heart-rending anguish might be heard issuing from her thin parched lips. But she held communion with no one, and seemed heedless of the passers by. At length she crossed the street, and having knocked at the massive and well-studded outer-door of the prison, inquired if she might see the principal jailor. He was brought to her. On his appearing—

“The deer of the mountain,” said his strange visiter, “is in the toils of the hunter. Oh! black and dismal day that that proud and gallant spirit that was wont to roam so wild and so free should be cooped up within the four stone walls of a loathsome dungeon—that those swift and manly limbs should be fettered with iron—and that the sword should be denied to that strong arm which was once so ready to defend the defenceless!”

“What mean ye, honest woman?” said the jailor, who was a good deal puzzled to discover a meaning in this address.

“What mean I?” exclaimed his visitor, sternly. “Do not I mean that the brave is the captive of the coward—that the strong has fallen before the weak—that the daring and fearless has been circumvented by the timid and the cunning? Do not I mean this?—and is it not true? Is



not James Macpherson a prisoner within these walls, and are you not his keeper?"

"It is so," replied the astonished functionary.

"I know it," said his visitor. "Then will you convey this to him?" she said, bringing out a violin from beneath her plaid.

The jailor looked in amazement, first at the woman, and then at the instrument.

"What!" he at length said, "take a fiddle to a man who's going to be hanged! That is ridiculous."

"It is his wish," said the former, briefly. "The wish of a dying man. Will you convey it to him?"

"Oh, if it be his wish, he shall surely have it," said the jailor; "but it is the oddest wish I ever heard."

"You *will* convey it to him, then?" replied the stranger, with the same sententious brevity as before.

"I will," was the rejoinder.

The woman curtsied and withdrew in the same cold, stern, and formal manner she had maintained throughout the interview. On her departure, the jailor proceeded to Macpherson's dungeon with the extraordinary commission with which he had been charged. The latter, on seeing the well-known instrument, snatched it eagerly and delightedly from its bearer, exclaiming—"Welcome, welcome! thou dear companion of better days! thou solacer of many a heavy care! thou delight of many a happy hour! Faithful Eneas!" And with the wild, strange, and romantic recklessness of his nature, he immediately began to play in the sweetest tones imaginable—tones which seemed to have acquired additional pathos from the circumstances of the performer—some of the melancholy airs of his native land; and from that hour till the hour of the minstrel's doom, these strains were almost constantly heard pouring through the small grated window of his dungeon. But they were soon to cease for ever. Macpherson was, in a few days



afterwards, brought to trial, and condemned to be hanged at the cross of Banff.

On the day on which he suffered the last penalty of the law, he requested the jailor to send some one with his violin to him to the place of execution. The request was complied with. The instrument was put into his hands as he stood at the foot of the gallows, when he played over the melancholy air known by the name of "Macpherson's Lament." It had been composed by himself while in prison. On concluding the pathetic strain, he grasped his violin by the neck, dashed it to pieces against the gallows, and flung the fragments into the grave prepared for himself at the foot of the gibbet. In a few minutes after, that grave was occupied by all that remained of Macpherson the Freebooter.

We have now, we conceive, to gratify the reader's curiosity on one point only—and this is accomplished by adverting to Ellen Martin. The unhappy girl ultimately ascertained, though not till long after his execution, who her mysterious lover was; but neither the history of her attachment to him, nor her intimacy with him, was ever known to any one besides his friend Eneas; for to none other had he ever named her. Nor, during his confinement, or at any period after his capture, had he ever made the slightest allusion to her. This, indeed, from motives of delicacy towards her, he had studiously and carefully avoided.

On Ellen, the effect of a grief—for the discovery of her lover's real character had not been able to efface the impressions which his handsome person and gentle manners had made upon her young heart—the effect, we say, of a grief which she durst not avow, was that of inspiring a settled melancholy, and determining her on a life of celibacy. In the grave of Macpherson was buried the object of her first love, and she never knew another.



## THE MONKS OF DRYBURGH.

THESE worthies were celebrated for “guid kail;” but they were no less remarkable for their ingenuity in directing the wealth of their neighbours and dependents into their own coffers. In common with others of their profession, they assailed the deathbeds of the wealthy, and persuaded the dying sinner that he had no chance of heaven unless he came handsomely down for their holy brotherhood before his departure.

It was for such a purpose as this that two of the brethren of Dryburgh set out, one day, in great haste, to visit the old Laird of Meldrum, who, they had been informed, was suddenly brought to the point of death; and the information was but too true—for the old man had not only arrived at the point of death, but had passed it, and that ere they came. In other words, the laird was dead when they arrived, and their services, of course, no longer required.

This was a dreadful disappointment to the holy men; for they had reckoned on making an excellent thing of the job, as the laird had been long in their eye, and had been carefully trained up for the *finale* of a handsome bequest.

It was with long faces, therefore, and woful looks, that the monks returned to their monastery, and reported the unlucky accident of the laird’s having slipped away before they had had time to make anything of him in his last moments. The disappointment was felt by all to be a grievous one, for the laird had been confidently reckoned upon as sure game. While in this state of mortification, a bright idea occurred to one of the brethren, and he mentioned it to the rest, by whom it was highly approved of.

This idea was to conceal the laird’s death for a time;



to remove his body out of the way, and to procure some one to occupy his bed, and pass for the laird in a dying state: then to procure a notary and witnesses, having previously instructed the laird's representative how to conduct himself—that is, to bequeath all his property to the monastery: this done, the living man to be secretly conveyed away, the dead one restored to his place again, and his death publicly announced.

This ingenious scheme of the monk met with universal approbation, and it was determined that it should be instantly acted upon.

Fortunately, so far, for the monks, there was a poor man, a small farmer in the neighbourhood, of the name of Thomas Dickson, who bore a singularly strong personal resemblance to the deceased—a circumstance which at once pointed him out as the fittest person to act the required part. This person was, accordingly, immediately waited upon, the matter explained to him, and a handsome gratuity offered him for his services.

“A bargain be't,” said Thomas, when the terms were proposed to him; “never ye fear me. If I dinna mak a guid job o't, blame me. I kent the laird weel, and can come as near him in speech as I'm said to do in person.”

The monks, satisfied with Thomas's assurances of fidelity, proceeded with their design; and, when everything was prepared—the laird's body removed out of the way, Thomas extended on his bed, and the curtains closely drawn round him—they introduced the notary, to take down the old man's testament (having previously intimated to the former that he was required by the latter for that purpose), and four witnesses to attest the facts that were about to be exhibited. Everything being in readiness—the lawyer with pen in hand, and the witnesses in the attitude of profound attention—one of the monks intimated to the dying man that he might now proceed to dictate his will.



“Very well,” replied the latter, in a feeble, tremulous tone. “Hear me, then, good folks a’. I bequeath to honest Tammis Dickson, wham I hae lang respeckit for his worth, and pitied for his straits, the hail o’ my movable guidis and lyin’ money. Put doon that.” And down *that* accordingly went. But if the house had flown into the air with them, or the ghosts of their great-grandfathers had appeared before them, the monks could not have expressed more amazement or consternation than they did, at finding themselves thus so fairly outwitted by the superior genius of the canny farmer. They dared not, however, breathe a word of remonstrance, nor take the smallest notice of the trick that was about being played them; for their own character was at stake in the transaction, and the least intimation of their design on the laird’s property would have exposed them to public infamy—and this Thomas well knew. It was in vain, therefore, that they edged round towards the bed—concealing, however, their movements from those present—and squeezed and pinched the dying laird. He was not to be so driven from his purpose. On he went, bequeathing first one thing and then another to his honest friend Thomas Dickson, till Thomas was fairly put in possession of everything the laird had worth bequeathing. Some trifles, indeed, he had the prudence and discretion to bestow upon the monks of Dryburgh; but trifles they were, truly, when compared to the valuable legacy he left to himself.

When the dying laird had disposed of everything he had, the scene closed. The discomfited monks returned to their monastery—the notary and the witnesses departed—and Thomas Dickson, in due time, stepped into a comfortable living, and defied the monks of Dryburgh, on the peril of their good name, even to dare to hint how he had come by it.



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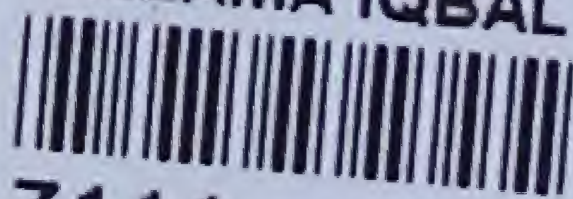
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